

Dead Man's Party revision – Three more chapters

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I got three more chapters and change finished on the read-and-annotate part of the revision before I had to move on to other things. Had a late start, but managed solid work and some good re-thinknig of early middle of the book before the fine edge of chaos wedged its way into my day.

So now I'm heading into the list of things that I have to do that don't require deep thought or creativity, because any sort of thinking that can't be guided by a checklist is going to be beyond my reach for the rest of the day.

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The Ohio Series: 2667 words, and SOFW Goals

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Summer of Fiction Writing stuff first. I didn't realize until this morning when I went it to check them that I'd forgotten to write down all steps of my clear goals.

So the first thing I did this morning was that. They're on the forum, but I'm reposting them here as well.

My Summer of Writing Fiction Clear Goals:



My Summer of Fiction Writing Goals

- Note: If you want to play, login first or create your free account: <https://hollyswritingclasses.com>
- Then: <http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/SOFW-forum.html>

A smack on the forehead here... I wrote down what I wanted to accomplish this summer in the “discussing what we’re going to be doing” thread, but failed to actually write my own goals here (the SOFW forum). Went looking for them last night, because I wanted to check them against what I was doing in my bullet journal, and... eep. Nothing.

So, somewhat late to my own party, here’s what I’m doing:

My summer FICTION goals are to get clear through the worldbuilding and plotting of *The Emerald Sun: Moon & Sun 3* and to have about 70,000 words done on the first draft of Book 1 of the Ohio Series.

Along with that, I’d like to have *Dead Man’s Party* and *The Wishbone Conspiracy* revised and to my editor (Matt). If I can only finish one revision in that time, it has to be DMP, because that’s the one that’s becoming the Accelerated Revision Bonus Demo for *How to Revise Your Novel* as soon as it’s finished.

My clear target is:

1. Finish the first draft (or first 70,000 words, if I overrun my planned word count) of The Ohio Series: Novel 1 *TOS: N1*
2. Do the complete revision of Dead Man's Party – *DMP* – for both the How to Revise Your Novel class (as the demo for the streamlined “once you’ve done a few in-depth revisions” process
3. Worldbuilding and plotting for The Emerald Sun (Moon & Sun 3): *M&S 3*

My reachable deadline is:

1. *TOS: N1* – August 31
2. *DMP* Revision – June 30
3. *M&S 3* – START DATE: July 1 – COMPLETION DATE August 31

My working days are: Complicated...

1. *TOS: N1* – Wed/Thur/Fri
2. *DMP*: Monday
3. *M&S 3*: Monday

My method of measuring progress:

1. *TOS: N1* – Word count – 2000 words per day average
2. *DMP*: Read and mark up the entire manuscript fast as possible while still doing a good job – pretend it’s a commercial revision deadline with a great slot bump if I hit it, then...Move on to type in, and complete the entire type in over the remaining time, throwing in Marketing Tuesday and weekend if needed.
3. *M&S 3*: As follows ...
 - Both *M&S 1* and two fully read and annotated with yellow stickies on the important bits
 - Toys on Floor identified
 - Plot built in line-for-scene fashion in my Scrivener novel template, so that I am ready to start writing the novel while the *TOS: N1* cools.

My end goal:

1. TOS: N1 – Complete first draft finished and ready for its pre-revision cooling period
2. DMP: Novel revised and ready to send to bug hunters
3. M&S 3: Complete novel outline in Scrivener, reference books (M&S 1 and 2) marked, tagged, and on desk ready for referral as needed.

My daily goal, and number of available days:

1. TOS: N1 – 39 days, average of 2000 wpd
2. DMP: 7 MAX... 4 if things go well.
3. M&S 3: 9 best case 10-12 if things don't go well and I have to use some Marketing Tuesdays

My leverage – WHY I need to do this:

1. **TOS: N1** – This is my first foray in years into urban fantasy, and I'm going in with a brand-new pseudonym and essentially starting over, with the hopes of building an audience focused just on my urban fantasy. It's a major career experiment in trying to build a comfortable income from my fiction – and getting my fiction to feed my family better than the canned beans lifestyle it's offered with few exceptions since the beginning **would let me put half my work time into writing new fiction.**
2. **DMP:** The *How to Revise Your Novel* class is getting a long-needed revision later this year, and the **Dead Man's Party revision is going to be the brand new Accelerated Revision DEMO Bonus.** Gotta get it done.
3. **M&S 3:** **Because I promised I would finish the series for the kids who read the first two books years ago.** My word has to mean something – I have to keep that promise.

And then Today's Words

The story flew, and I had a hard time stopping so I could get

to the other tasks on my list. I kept wanting to find out what happened next – and what happened next was never what I thought was going to happen.

I finished my provisional outline yesterday, and though things never happen the way they do in the outline, the outline makes sure I include important events, don't forget characters, and don't forget the "ending, or better" that I'm writing toward.

So today, my goal was 2000 words and in my allotted time, I got 2667. It was an AWESOME writing day.

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Why I shut down my Patreon fundraiser

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'd intended to send a *Questions & Answers* email to my [How to Write a Novel](#) launch list, but that's going to have to wait. Instead, I did THIS.

Closed my "Move out of Florida while writing fiction" fundraiser.

Here's why – it's this clause in the Patreon Legal Agreement

<https://www.patreon.com/legal>

By posting content to Patreon you grant us a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, sublicensable, worldwide license to use, reproduce, distribute, perform,

publicly display or prepare derivative works of your content.

Understand that I read that clause and all the rest of them before signing up.

BUT... I'm not a lawyer, and I understood that clause to mean that Patreon was claiming the right to use my Patreon-created content (in other words, my POSTS) to promote the site.

I DID NOT think that they were claiming the right to use and abuse the content I was giving my patrons. In this case, three monthly chapters of the raw first draft of one of my current novels in progress, Dead Man's Party.

A friend emailed me with a link to this post, however:

<https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-beginning-of-the-end-for-patreon/>

Turns out, I was wrong. Patreon is claiming rights to my novel.

So I'm out. I sent the first copy of this email to my patrons using a private Patreon post, and then I shut down my Patreon fundraiser, and am now trying to figure out how to actually close my account.

I'm not letting this kill my dream of moving us out of Florida...

...(hopefully before the next hurricane, if not the start of the hurricane season).

How you can help, if you want to –

IF YOU'RE HERE AS A WRITER:

I have created original classes ranging from under ten dollars to way over a hundred. If one of the classes I offer could help you, then you buying it would help me.

MY COMPREHENSIVE CAREER-LEVEL CLASSES (in recommended order)

***** How to Write a Novel *****

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/class/how-to-write-a-novel.html>

(IN LAUNCH: On sale ONLY through Tuesday APRIL 8 – Final Discount Launch)

How to Revise Your Novel:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-revise-your-novel.html>

How to Write a Series:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-a-series.html>

How to Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-think-sideways.html>

WRITING CRAFT SERIES (Each class is under \$10)

Create a Character Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/characterclinic.html>

Create A Plot Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/plotclinic.html>

How to Write Page-Turning Scenes:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/pageturningscenes.html>

WORLDBUILDING SERIES (Each class is under \$10)

Create A Language Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/languageclinic.html>

Create a Culture Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/cultureclinic.html>

Create a World Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/worldclinic.html>

WORKSHOPS & MID-SIZED CLASSES (PRICES VARY)

How to Write Short Stories:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-short-stories-class.html>

How to Write Villains:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-villains.html>

How to Write Dialogue with Subtext:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/dialogue-subtext.html>

Title Cover Copy Marketing Basics:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/titlecovercopy.html>

How to Find Your Writing Discipline:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/writingdiscipline.html>

How to Find Your Writing Voice:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/writing-voice.html>

How to Motivate Yourself:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/motivate-yourself.html>

Beat Writer's Block:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/beatwritersblock.html>

FREE, INCLUDED WITH (also Free) SITE MEMBERSHIP

How to Write Flash Fiction That Doesn't Suck

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/free-flash-fiction-class.html>

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IF YOU'RE HERE AS A READER:

You can help out by buying some of my indie-published fiction.

SHORT STUFF, CURRENTLY AMAZON ONLY:

Light Through Fog:

<https://www.amazon.com/Light-Through-Holly-Lisle-Singles-ebook/dp/B0096F4HY0/>

Rewind:

<https://www.amazon.com/Rewind-Holly-Lisle-Singles-Book-ebook/dp/B00AY10HAE/>

Strange Arrivals:

<https://www.amazon.com/Strange-Arrivals-Twisty-Fantasy-Tales-ebook/dp/B00E0WMYRW/>

FANTASY – ARHEL TRILOGY

Fire in the Mist:

<https://books2read.com/FireInTheMist>

Bones of the Past:

<https://books2read.com/BonesOfThePast>

Mind of the Magic:

<https://books2read.com/MindOfTheMagic>

DARK SCIENCE FICTION-ISH

SETTLED SPACE

Both of the Cadence Drake novels – *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood* and *Warpaint*, are off sale while I come up with new titles and new cover art for them, and new key words, descriptions, and other marketing that allows me to correctly put them in front of the audience that likes a few vampires and a bit of horror with its spaceships.

The Longview Chronicles (complete Series) is in the same universe – still dark, but without the vampires:

<https://books2read.com/longview-chronicles>

Or you can get the individual stories:

Born from Fire:

<https://books2read.com/born-from-fire>

Suzee Delight:

<https://books2read.com/the-selling-of-suzee-delight>

Philosopher Gambit:

<https://books2read.com/the-philosopher-gambit>

Gunslinger Moon:

<https://books2read.com/gunslinger-moon>

Vipers' Nest:

<https://books2read.com/vipers-nest>

The Owner's Tale:

<https://books2read.com/the-owners-tale>

STANDALONE URBAN FANTASY

Minerva Wakes:

<https://books2read.com/minerva-wakes>

PARANORMAL SUSPENSE

Author Page:

<https://books2read.com/ap/xbzgyx/Kate-Aeon>

Midnight Rain:

<https://books2read.com/midnight-rain>

Last Girl Dancing:

<https://books2read.com/last-girl-dancing>

I See You:

<https://books2read.com/i-see-you>

I have much more fiction that's commercially published, or which is out of print and has reverted to me, but which I have not yet republished.

I'm not linking to ANY of that fiction, because your purchase of used books or books where publishers haven't paid royalties in years will not help me.

So there we are.

I want to thank all my patrons again, and I am so sorry that I had to do this, but there is no way I can permit this:

Excerpted from Patreon Legal Terms

You keep full ownership of all content that you post on Patreon, but to operate we need licenses from you.

By posting content to Patreon you grant us a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, sublicensable, worldwide license to use, reproduce, distribute, perform, publicly display or prepare derivative works of your content.

**No. Just NO.
Holly**

P.S. I have had one of my Patreon patrons already ask me how she could continue to support me on a monthly basis.

Here's the answer I gave her:

"I'll look into what's available. Right now, I'm crushed to discover the rights Patreon actually claimed, and worried about getting involved with any other site. So I'm in limbo. You'll find my blog at HollyLisle.com. I'll be keeping my folks there up to date on how I deal with this. It sucks.

Hugs, and thank you for asking."

Why is EVERYBODY on my blog, my mailing list, and in my forums getting this?

Because if you know me, you're probably either a reader or a writer. If you're a writer, you may be considering using Patreon, and you need to know. If you're a reader considering

funding someone on Patreon, THEY need to know.

And this is the ugliest, broadest rights-grab I have personally ever seen. Or sadly, been caught up in.

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The Tale of the Tail in the TalysMana Revision

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Last Friday, I printed out my manuscript and my revision worksheets, located my pens, and set everything aside. Saturday was to be my first day of revision.

And Saturday with the the big table cleared for writing, I started into revising my badly wrecked fantasy novel *TalysMana*, written back in 2010.



I was planning on doing the way I always do it – manuscript loose and on the left, notebook and notes top and right.

You figure, I've been refining this system since 1995, and I knew I had it pretty well nailed down.

So I had everything neatly laid out – this time with more

papers than usual, because instead of using my advanced streamlined system, I'm going through and treating *TalysMana* exactly as if it were the first revision I'd ever done. I'm using my first-time-through system from [How to Revise Your Novel](#), and saving all my work to add to the class as a demonstration walk-through.



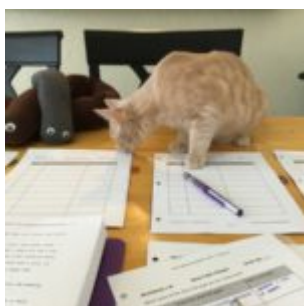
So here's what that looks like...

Neat, organized, simple to get through. Time-consuming if it's your first time, but this ISN'T My first time, and I anticipated making pretty decent progress the first day. Unlike most of my books, I pantsed this one, so the part at the beginning is the part I got closest to right, and I while knew it ran off the tracks more and more the deeper into the story I went, Saturday was supposed to be easy sailing.

I know things are going to get worse and messier the deeper in I get. But hey, I'm a professional. I got this. Right?

Turns out, not so much.

What I wasn't prepared for was *help*.



Enter "help," stage left.

Sheldon levitated onto the table with his usual gravity-free grace. (I'll note that no one eats on this table, in spite of the fact that it's in the dining room, which is why no one cringes when the cat goes there.)

He discovered an entire field of his favorite things: Stacks of paper, pens, plastic folder separators.

Sheldon spends a lot of time around office supplies, which he believes are named "No," "No, dammit!" and, "Aargh!"



Three quick sniffs and a joyful growl and he leapt into the middle of my work, chased my pens across the table, scattered my pages, and carried the pen I was using to the floor to eat.

I retrieved my pen, said "Office Supplies" to him a thousand times in under ten minutes, and watched him sulk off at last.

I restacked everything, got to work, and enjoyed maybe ten minutes of peace and cat-free quiet and stillness. Until the question, "Why is he being good?" flitted all paranoid-y and bug-eyed through the back of my mind.

Of course there was a reason he was being quiet.

It's the same reason your two-year-old is being quiet.

He'd found something he knew he wasn't allowed to touch, and because he wasn't being supervised, he wreaked havoc upon it.



This is a skein of Zauberboll Crazy, lovely German yarn given to me by a friend also named Holly.

Sheldon, a name that I have just discovered translates as “the horns are hidden beneath the fur,” had somehow finagled this out of a bag from beneath the two folded sweaters that were supposed to make it impossible for him to reach, and was lying on the couch shoving his head as far into it as it would go and inhaling Smell O’ Sheep™ from it like it was cocaine and he was some Wall Street dude from the eighties, then hanging onto it with his teeth while kicking it with his hind legs, causing the ball to both unravel and to tangle.

Thus ended Saturday revision.

Sunday I set myself the task of figuring out how to cat-proof my work. ‘Cause... still have to revise the novel, still have to revise many more to come, still going to keep Ol’ Horns-Beneath-The-Fur.



So I hole-punched the entire manuscript and put it by itself into the big D-Ring binder. Dug out one of the strap-type cardboard binders I use to hold print-outs of my shorter classes. Put all of the empty worksheets and their dividers

into this. (Little-known fact: *Holly* translates into English as “addicted to office supplies.”)

Cut my pens down to a black one for the worksheets and a red one for the manuscript.

Today, I set out the revision, and this time, got all the way to page 48. The image at the very top of this tale of struggle and triumph is of Sheldon with TODAY’s work in front of him, stymied by my office-supply solution, and trying to take the pen I’m using, this time to have it taken away from him.

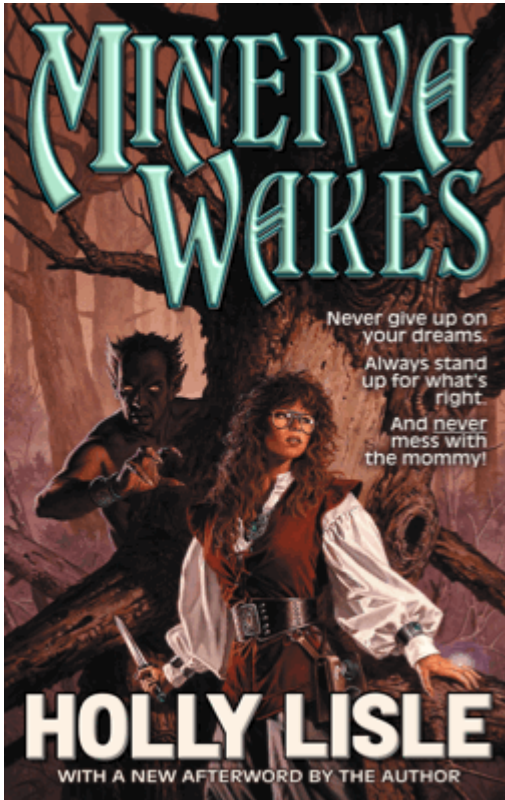
And this time... no yarn for him to wreak vengeance upon. That’s now in a zippered bag. Little bugger can fetch a ball (cat-style – he has to chase it, attack it, and pounce on it for twenty minutes before he finally brings it back to you), is trying to open doors by hanging on the doorknobs, likes to turn the touch lamp on and off, and took a flying leap at the light switch the other day. (Would have worked if it hadn’t already been down).

But he can’t (yet) work a zipper.

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Minerva Wakes re-release, and new revision freebie

[By Holly Lisle](#)



The Story:

Ahead of a coming storm, Minerva Kiakra is fighting her way through crowded grocery aisles, when the last box of cereal is yanked from her grasp...

...by the impossible.

She does not see a dragon. Does not. Does NOT.

And when the same dragon cuts her off in traffic?

No, no, no.

But the thing she doesn't want to see is running one step ahead of the thing she doesn't want to have happen. And she can't stop either one.

Once upon a time, Minerva made a mistake. She stopped fighting for her dreams. Now there's a price to be paid.

But the universe just made a mistake, too. It messed with the wrong mommy.

About this version: In the *Minerva Wakes* re-release, I've

included a lengthy new Afterword. I've also cleaned up the typos from the commercially released first version, and fixed one small story bug that I missed when I wrote the book back in 1994.

You can get it here:

[Amazon](#) | [Apple Store](#) | [Kobo](#) | [Scribd](#) | [Smashwords](#) | [!ndigo](#) | [Mondadori](#)

And if you're a fiction writer and you have one or more manuscripts that are broken, and that you can't figure out how to fix...

I've put together a REALLY short quiz that will identify the biggest revision problem you're having, and that will then provide you with a free video and worksheet that will show you how to fix it.

[Here's the link.](#)

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HowToThinkSideways.com Site Move: LAST Chance to Correct Your Account

[By Holly Lisle](#)



The move over at HowToThinkSideways.com is starting

We're starting to move member accounts onto the live new software, new domain, and new classrooms this week.

In order to receive your new temporary password, you MUST have a working email address in your current account.

Here are the steps to make sure you'll be able to get to your stuff (INCLUDING free class, worksheets, and forums).

Step One: Check your current account

Log into your current account here:

<https://howtothinksideways.com/login/> (opens in new window)

If you cannot get into your account, create a Help Desk ticket for me here:

<http://novelwritingschool.com/support/>

Tell me everything you remember about your account:

- Full name
- User name
- current email address, plus any possible older email address that might have been attached to the account

NOT your password. Never give anyone your password.

Step Two: Once you're logged in, check your email address

Your email address is the first and most important piece of

information where your NEW account is concerned.

It will be your sign-in name. It will be your contact address in case anything on your account breaks.

And it will be where your "This is your new account" email goes, which contains the validation link you MUST click in order to receive your new temporary password.

If that email address is wrong, you will not be able to get into your classroom, and following the move while the dust settles, I am expecting LONG lines in the Help Desk.

So check your email address in your account:

<http://howtothinksideways.com/myaccount/>

You cannot fix anything you see here. This is part of the software that is broken.

So if you have an email address linked to your account that no longer works,
create a Help Desk ticket for me here:

<http://novelwritingschool.com/support/>

* Tell me the email address that's in your account

* Tell me what it I need to change it to

At this point, fixing missing classes will just slow us down

We'll still have all the data and receipts we have right now, and will still have backups of your existing account and all previous purchases from my sites.

If you're missing anything, gather your receipts, and once you can get into your classrooms on the new site, let me know which ones aren't working for you there. (They'll be the same ones.)

Right now, we have to deal with the part that will keep people

out of their accounts completely.

□

We'll be moving people in groups

I'm the only one doing the help desk stuff (because I'm the only one with nearly years of receipts stored on my hard drive) and having 300 people in line in the help desk is incredibly stressful. (I know this, because I've had this happen before.)

Massive stress is not healthy for me right now.

So Dan and I will move a group, those folks will receive their confirmation and sign-in emails, if you're in that group, you'll sign in and promptly check for problems with your classes, I'll fix your account, and we'll move another group.

We have well over 10,000 people to move. This will take some time.

But you might be in the very first group, so today you need to make sure your email address will work.

Thank you for your help on this.

And I'll see you inside.

Write with joy,

Holly Lisle

□

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Round 1 Testing for New Holly Lisle Writing School Website: 39 Volunteers Requested Now

[By Holly Lisle](#)

CANCELLED

WebinarJam has crashed every time but one on this, with people unable to reach rooms I'm in. I've checked my links, I've checked their links, and at this point, the only thing I can do to stop wasting people's time is give up.

I'm going to see if there's some way to do this same process with Skype. I'll set the testing back up again if there is.

CANCELLED

~~Today (Wednesday, September 9th) and tomorrow (Thursday, September 10th), I'm going to be doing what's called "Paper Testing" to find usability problems with the interface the new writing school site (HollyLisleOnlineWritingSchool.com, or HLOWs.com for short).~~

I need a maximum of 39 volunteers (already have one) for one-on-one testing with me in a video chat room.

Paper Testing is fun, and it will take each volunteer about fifteen minutes WORST case.

Here's how it works. I have five scripts prepared. They start with things like, "You're a first-time visitor to the site. Find something that interests you, and tell me why."

Or, "You're already a member. Log in."

Here are the instructions for doing a usability test:

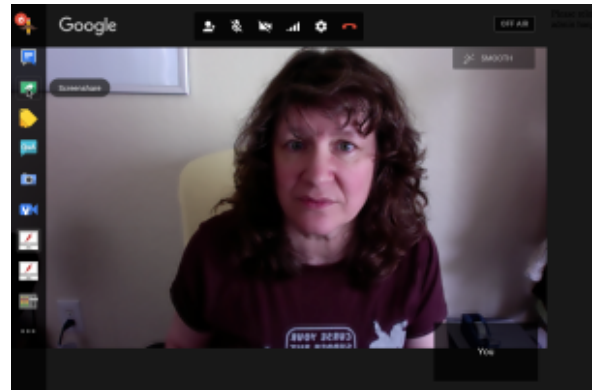
Paper Test #1 for HLOWs.com

How To Do Your Usability Test

At the scheduled time, log into the web chat link I'll send you.

Make sure I'm already in chat with you. (Have your microphone on, and say "Hi." ☐ You'll be coming in as a presenter, and I might hear you before I see you.)

Find the screenshare button on the left, where I've highlighted it. Image below.



Screenshare button on left sidebar

To help me test, all you have to do is talk while you work your way through the instructions I give you by clicking the places on the drawings where you think the necessary actions SHOULD take place, describing what you're trying and what you think your action will accomplish.



When you complete one instruction, I'll give you the next task. There are a MAXIMUM of six tasks in each test, and the whole test will take no more than about fifteen minutes if I've done a terrible job of laying out the site.

You do not need to hurry. **If you make mistakes, me seeing them happen will help me figure out where I've made mistakes in the design. Your mistakes will make the final site better.**

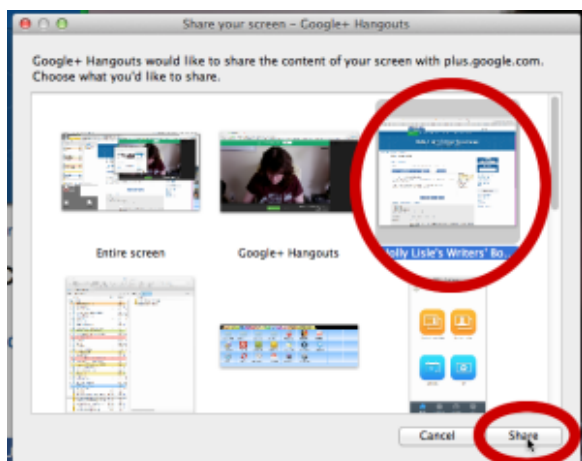
Take your time, think out loud, and let me know every time something doesn't make sense to you or you cannot figure out or find a way to accomplish the instruction on your script.

Here's what you'll need to volunteer:

- A microphone or mic headset that works with your computer, or a built-in mic that you know has good volume.
- The Chrome web browser and a Gmail email address. Reply to this post with your Gmail address because that's the only way I can make you a presenter in the web app, and you must be a presenter to share your screen. You'll need Chrome because the controls I show above won't work if you're not using Chrome.

I'll also use this address to schedule our session with you.

- A second browser that ISN'T Chrome. You'll be using that browser to share your screen. The Paper Test is very low tech, but does require that your browser process images. This WILL NOT WORK with a cell phone because of the primitive nature of the test. When you have your second browser opened, you'll click the screenshare button, highlight that browser,



Select your OTHER browser...

and click the share button.

- About fifteen minutes that you can block out of an hour or so of availability. If you post your response here and let me know today or tomorrow, and the time you could be available (any one-hour block from which I can pull 15 minutes, or something cool like “anytime between 10 AM and 3PM” will work, I’ll set up a schedule with testing times and mail each volunteer with your fifteen-minute block, along with the login details. (The fifteen-minute block starting at noon tomorrow is already taken, but as I write this, everything else is wide open.
- I will be saving the screen test as a video, and Dan, the moderator, and I will be going over all of them looking for places where my initial design causes problems, and where we can make things better and easier to use, so if you volunteer, you automatically agree that I can save and use the video of your test.

Let me know you can help by posting your availability times below. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY—if you can use your web browser, you can do this.

I’ll give you the URL for the papertest site once you arrive and have your screenshare browser set up.

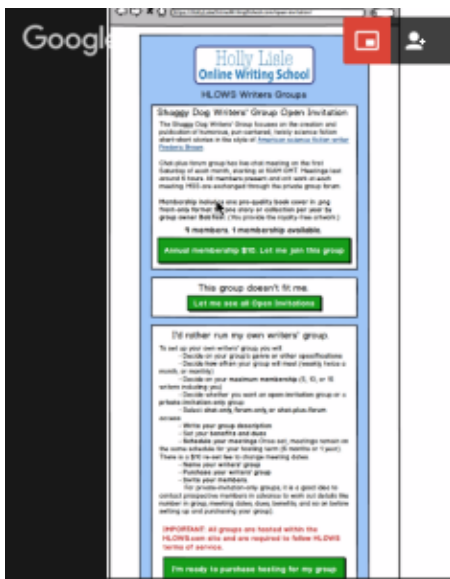
I’ll be starting testing at 10 AM this morning if I have volunteers by then, and doing as many tests as I can before 3

PM. I'll be doing the same thing on Thursday.

Thank you in advance for volunteering. I want to make sure that when we build the front end for the new site (which will NOT be what we go live with, but which will follow soon after) you'll have a site that is easy for you to use.

By the way...

This is a sneak peek of one of the test pages:



Paper-test example page

Holly Lisle

CANCELLED

WebinarJam has crashed every time but one on this, with people unable to reach rooms I'm in. I've checked

my links, I've checked their links, and at this point, the only thing I can do to stop wasting people's time is give up.

I'm going to see if there's some way to do this same process with Skype. I'll set the testing back up again if there is.

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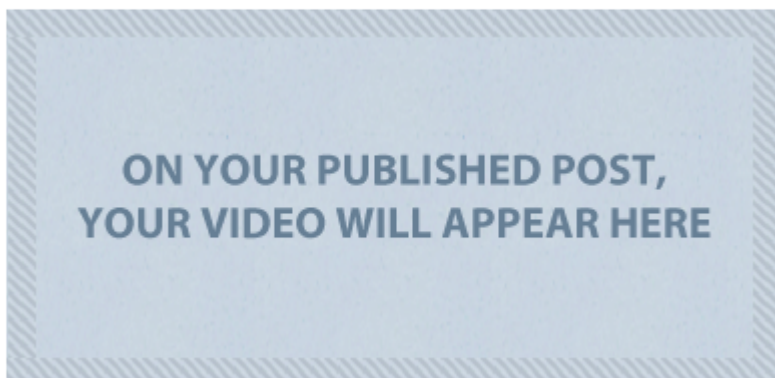
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Video & Podcast Test: How To Write Suckitudinous Fiction

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I chose [one of my funnier articles on writing fiction](#) and turned it into both a video and a podcast. I'm testing new software that I hope to use for a number of different applications, including workshops, and I'd like to know how these two formats work for you.

VIDEO TEST:



AUDIO TEST



YOUTUBE LINK:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTAksz1NFyc>

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Lessons from the Fall: Beta Test Hell

[By Holly Lisle](#)



The Current HTTS Website:
Undead and still coming for

me.

To see if I could make things easier for writers using the **How To Think Sideways** site, (still with the shop locked while it awaits installation of the interim site), I put together a beta test site using a theme I thought would help, and a plugin I REALLY thought would help. (Both theme and plugin shall remain nameless because I have no desire to rip apart the work of others.)

One of the writers who did the beta test contacted me after [reading my post-beta analysis \(link opens in new tab\)](#), worried that if I got so few responses from so many folks who had actually joined the beta test, he had no hope of anyone ever finding his work.

Not so.

Here is my reply to him:

Hi, BOB, (name changed to my all-time favorite fall-back name to protect the innocent)

I spent the weekend down with a migraine that I still have. More on that in a minute.

As for the beta test, I think what happened was fatigue.

I built the site and sent folks in to give me comments in the form at the end of the first test class.

People went in and did the comments in the form.

The form didn't work.

I sent everyone back in to do the comments in the form again after "fixing" it.

The form didn't work.

I set up a page for comments, and the people who had already

done the damn thing twice thought, "Fuck it, I've already done the damn thing twice," and didn't comment a third time.

But I could only use the comments I had, and the comments I had were not sufficient to demonstrate to me that repainting my current sinking ship was valid use of my time.

I'd already wasted about a week building the beta, and my long-suffering testers had made two attempts using software I was hoping would make life easier for everyone on the current site, and had received resounding proof that the plugin I'd hoped would fix things would in fact... NOT.

And this process, which has a lot in common with most of my experience with building my own sites—and which is why I don't WANT to build my own sites anymore—gave me the migraine that I still can't shake.

Which is further proof that I need to focus on writing, let Dan do the software end of things, and make life less hideous for my head.

I wanted to let folks know where things stand right now.

Dan is running ahead of schedule, and may have the fixed interim site up on HowToThinkSideways.com as early as tonight. If he does, I'll go into the help desk, grab all the ON HOLD tickets, and fix each of those accounts tomorrow morning. AND open the shop.

Even if he doesn't, we are very close, and will be using the same URL for now.

The new site will go live when Dan is done building my new software, and not in a half-assed fashion beforehand.

So now I'm getting back to Episodes 3 and 4 of Tale From The Longview, so that I can get Module Four of How To Write A

Series started.

Onward, migraine in tow.

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Cool free stuff for you during my Birthday Week

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I turn 54 this week.

I'll have a post on that in a couple days, but for today, I have some presents for you.

Today (Monday, Oct 6, 2014–through Monday, October 13, 2014)

Readers:

[For every fiction book you buy from my shop for \\$5.99, I'll give you one \\$2.99 book free.](#)

Astute readers will have already noticed that there are 8 books for 5.99, and only 6 for \$2.99.

So if you buy more than SIX fiction books, you also get your choice of ONE of the following:

- Character Clinic,
- Plot Clinic,
- Language Clinic,
- Culture Clinic,
- World Clinic,
- Page-Turning Scenes.

To get them, set up a [HELP DESK ticket](#). Title your ticket HAPPY BIRTHDAY! FICTION. (You can copy and paste the ticket title) ☐

Copy and paste your receipts (including purchase dates) from my shop, Amazon.com, or B&N, and let me know which books you want.

Writers:

If you buy one BIG COURSE from the Shop:

- [How To Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers](#)
- [How To Revise Your Novel: Get the Book You WANT from the Wreck You Wrote](#)
- [How To Write A Series: Master the Art of Sequential Fiction](#)

You get one Workshop from this list:

- How To Write Dialogue With Subtext
- How To Beat Writer's Block
- How To Motivate Yourself

Or both workshops from this list:

- How To Find Your Writing Discipline
- 7-Day Crash Revision

AND:

One course from THIS list:

- Character Clinic,
- Plot Clinic,
- Language Clinic,
- Culture Clinic,
- World Clinic,
- Page-Turning Scenes.

To get them, set up a [HELP DESK ticket](#). Title your ticket HAPPY BIRTHDAY! NONFICTION. (You can copy and paste the ticket title) □

These offers are also good for purchases made ON OR AFTER Friday, September 5th, 2014.

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