

# Revelation Struck!!!

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

You grind. You dig. You read with increasing despair through a manuscript that seemed while you were writing it like a thing of wonder.

You wonder how you could have gone so far off the mark. And you think, "How did I think this was going to work?" and consider the possibility that you're going to have to ditch all of Book Two, and write a completely different second novel.

And then, while hanging out with your guy while he's shaving, you suddenly have this damned lightning-bolt-out-of-blue-holy-crap-why-didn't-see-this-before revelation.

You were asking the wrong primary question about the second book.

To avoid spoilers, I'm going to eliminate the details, and just state that, looking at the story I'd told and where it went off the rails, I was asking a WHY question.

The SECOND I rephrased the core novel conflict question to make it a HOW question, the book worked.

Yeah, I'll still need to do some revision. But my shifting the focus from WHY to HOW, this becomes a light, relatively friendly fix, where most of Book 2 is okay as written.

**Revision is a bitch.**

It screws with your head at the best of times and tells you the story is utter unsalvageable crap (or your head lies to you and tells you the damn thing is perfect, which is actually

worse for your outcome in the long run). Either way, you believe, and when you believe, you embrace the risk of putting crap out into the universe with your name (or pseudonym) on it.

And then you walk away, let your brain wander off to do other things... and your mind relaxes, and lets go of all the stress and anxiety.

And an answer appears.

Very, very sideways thinking, this process. And it still feels like magic every time it happens.

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# **I'm annoyed with myself – Ohio 2 revision read-through, markup... and an unanticipated issue**

written by Holly  
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So I'm all the way through page 422 on the read-through of Book 2.

There are 431 printed pages in the first-draft manuscript, and you'd think, wouldn't you, that being this close to the end of the book, I'd just finish the read-through and mark-up today?

Usually, I would.

But I've been hitting some walls with this novel's first draft. Places where I alluded to a lot of worldbuilding that I hadn't actually done, places where I used a couple of sentences to have something happen, and where that action needed at LEAST a full scene, and maybe even its own chapter...

And while it's evident that I had a helluva lot of fun worldbuilding on the fly, and beating up my MC, and putting all the folks I like in awful danger...

There are places in Book Two that read like a pretty good line-for-scene outline.

Book ONE is ready for typesetting and publication.

Book TWO is going to take a full-on revision and is going to probably come out the other end of its ordeal about 25% longer than it is right now. Best case.

So before I read what I decided made a good ending for Book Two when I wrote the first draft, I'm just going to let the story perk in the back of my mind for the rest of today.

I'll come back in tomorrow morning when I'm fresh, drop back a few pages to the beginning of the current chapter, read to the end, and then see if I can find a relatively short way to solve the problem I've made for myself.

If not, I'll be returning to the beginning of Book Two to build out the solution I see right now, which will add about a third to the length of this novel, and MIGHT complicate some of what I've written in Three through Five.

Arrgh!

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# Read-through write-in revision of Ohio 2 now done through page 233 of 431

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July 15, 2022

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Read-through/write-in notes today flew, with Book 2 being a remarkably clean first draft (not even a lot of typos)...

..Right up to the point where it wasn't.

In the last three novels, I changed some of the worldbuilding that I did in Two to something much better. And when I ran into the spot where I'd used OLD worldbuilding on page 221, I ended up doing a hard re-think on how I could save most of what I'd written in the next few chapters while still removing one BIG change that could have cost me about three to four chapters.

Got it, managed to do it while only killing about 250 words, and tomorrow I'll get to write a nifty bit of new stuff that makes the world a little weirder... but while NOT BREAKING later worldbuilding essential to the rest of the five novels. (And, if the first five find their readership, more books beyond them.)

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# Seventy-five pages of revision on Ohio Two... (evil grin)

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I'm discovering there a massive advantages in writing five novels back to back.

The stories are connected in your head while you write them.

And then they're connected in your head while you revise them. On the writing side of this, seventy-five pages into Book Two, I haven't had ANY continuity errors from what I wrote in Book One, the characters and situations were clearly fresh in my mind as I was developing scenes and situations.

From the point of having all those novels cool down while the next ones were being written, I came at Book Two not as someone who remembered what was in there really well, but as a brand new reader.

It all fit with the first book, but I didn't remember a damn thing about it. So I found myself laughing my ass off at stuff that took me by surprise, and being surprised a whole lot.

And occasionally horrified, and grossed out (in the place where I was supposed to be). Distance lends perspective, and while I had a LOT of typos, I've only had a few places where stuff had to be modified to fit what I know is coming in later books.

Nothing – so far – breaks the revised version of Book One.

And I am looking forward to tomorrow.

(Yeah, I know it isn't all going to be smooth sailing. I already know there are places in TWO that are going to require significant revision to fit stuff coming up. But so far... WHEEEEE!!!)

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# **Cuss, cuss, swear, swear, @#%^&\*Z!!!!**

written by Holly  
July 15, 2022  
By Holly Lisle

Seriously...

What a week. Earlier, the kitchen sink started spouting water, so we were doing dishes in the bathroom sink.

Then the water heater died. Matt found a plumber, who will be coming out today, but since Monday, I've been refreshing my unused-but-never-forgotten camping skills, and have been doing a daily bath using one cup of bottled water.

Yeah, it can be done.

Yeah, you can get clean.

No, it is NOT as wonderful as a nice shower with hot water. And washing your hair in the other cup of water from the bottle isn't fun, and does not give great results.

Good news, though... the plumber is coming today.

Meanwhile, I got ready to print out all four remaining manuscripts for a single five-novel one-pass revision. (Book One is already revised, but I do have to read through it and take notes on important elements that need to be consistent from book to book.)

However, I accidentally printed #5 first, and used up the last of my in-place HP printer cartridge doing that.

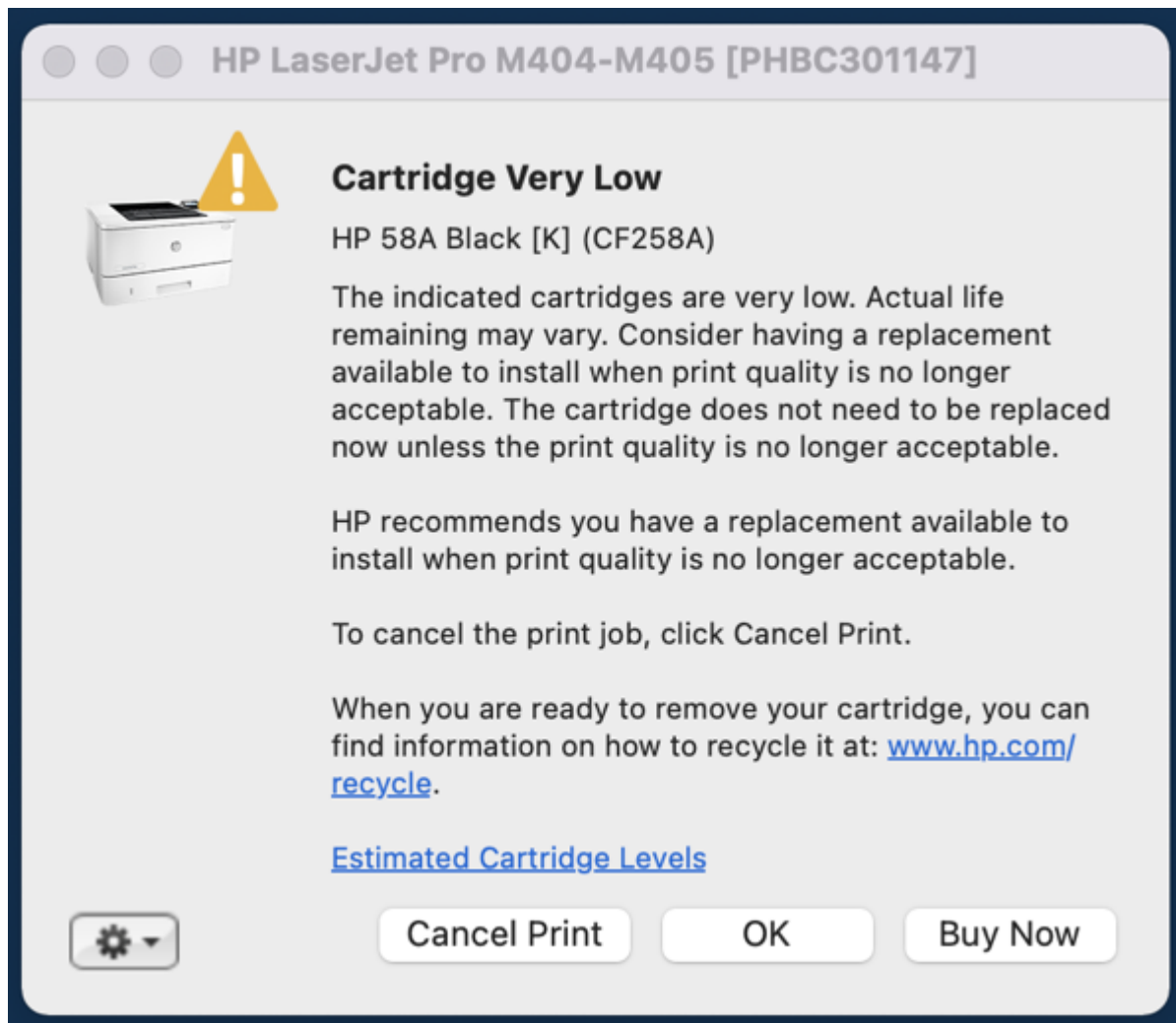
No problem, though. I'd bought a well-reviewed refurb cartridge off Amazon.

Except the product turned out to be A) a counterfeit cartridge for which B) people giving it 5-star reviews could prove they'd purchased it in order to get a \$30 kickback from the company (information was in the box). I shredded the kickback offer. (wish I hadn't now) – I would have added photos of the get-your-kick-back paperwork to my one-star review.

Meanwhile, the printer identified it as counterfeit, and would not use it.

Because I bought it months ago so I'd have it ready to go for the five novels, I couldn't return it.

So yesterday, we went to the BIG BOX (name withheld 'cause I'm betting this next thing isn't their fault) local office supply company, got their brand refill cartridge for \$110, and got THIS warning message...



So I didn't use it. I just put it back in the box, and am hoping that the place from which I bought it will take it back. We paid \$110 for it yesterday. I have NO pages to show for that money spent.

So...

Now I'm just going to wait for the plumber to get here.

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# FINISHED BOOK FIVE OF THE OHIO SERIES!!!

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

No, I didn't plan this. I thought I had another three weeks of writing to hit the end.

Yesterday, I was galloping along, and I'd planned to pick up today with the logical continuation of the scene I wrote yesterday, where my characters were in trouble...

And when I loped back into the office this morning to pick up where I left off, brain said, "Here, little writer. Here you go... have this spiffy bait..."

And I followed along, and the scene did not go where I expected. It went someplace so much better, and surprised me, and made me laugh...

And all of a sudden, in 2,000-ish words, the ending was right there. And it was the RIGHT ending.

So now I'm taking the weekend off.

I have five novels.

I've already read and revised the first one. The other four have been sitting on my hard drive, waiting for me to finish the first drafts so I can revise them all at once, and make sure I'm consistent with the changes I make...

Which means re-reading Book One before I do anything else, and then working off of that as I do four back-to-back revisions.

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# **Came up short... but landed well**

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Today's scene was fun. I like what I got, I like the twist, I like the humor.

I am, however, not feeling well, and at the point where I realized I've been circling the drain on the scene without coming up with a "what next", or anything else that would let me hit today's planned word count, I ALSO realized it's time to go stretch out on the couch and take a nap. Going to skip fixing links in emails today, going to skip heading into the forums.

I got 1177 words out of 1250 planned, and I really like what I got.

So for today, that's going to have to be good enough.

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# **Mwah-ha-ha-ha-HA! Evil is**

# afoot, and fun is right on its tail!

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Boy, today did not go where I thought it would. ***Not at ALL.***

In the back of my mind, I had this fun little scene planned, and when I popped out of the shower, I knew pretty much where I was going to start.

And I did start there – but absolutely none of the characters in the scene did what I expected, and the twist they threw at me was so wicked, and so perfect, that I ran with it, just to see what the hell the little buggers were going to do next.

Following them turned out to be the right choice, because I'm now deeply enmeshed in evil intentions and terrible plots and a horrible plan...

And tomorrow, I get to deal with that. And the beauty part is that none of this is coming at me out of left field. It all fits, it's all tightly enmeshed with things that happened in the previous four books, it is the logical outcome of what really happened in yesterday's scene, and while I need to quit now because I got my words and I have other stuff I have to do... Well, tomorrow I have the fun of rolling out onto the page EXACTLY how the shit goes down.

*Because the shit is gonna go down.*

God, I love this job.

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# Somebody's Lying! 1392 words, 65,395 total... and "Too Good to Be True" comes to town

written by Holly  
July 15, 2022  
By Holly Lisle

Today was a hoot.

Seriously.

Yesterday, I left my main in the middle of a situation that could have turned into a nightmare for her.

And I saved and quit for the day having no idea how I was going to handle it.

Today, though, the last line I wrote yesterday turned out to be just exactly right... because it could mean two completely different things at the same time, and it turns out I figured out a way to let it mean both.

Which SOLVED a situation that could have ended in bloodshed, disaster, and horror... and instead became pretty funny.

The truth underneath isn't funny. It's desperately important, and scary, and my main character both knows the truth and had a hand in engineering the plausible lie that's covering it up.

She de-escalated the disaster down into "oops, it was all a big misunderstanding."

It wasn't. Isn't.

And tomorrow, I get to bring out the truth, and start building toward the end of the novel, and closure for the fifth book, and maybe a slightly broader tie-up for the first five books of the series.

I have to wrap everything up with less than a third of the book remaining. So tomorrow, my objective is to let my mind wrap itself around creating the events that will conclude the novel, and tie up any remaining threads from the first four... and still leave myself elbow room for a bunch of stand-alones in the same world to follow.

And because I know not all of you guys are readers waiting for the book – some of you are writers watching what I'm doing (and some of you guys might be new to me) – I've covered in detail the way I'm writing these books in two classes I built:

How to Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers ... and How to Write a Novel.

I have a system. It looks pretty chaotic from the outside, but there really is a method to the madness, and it's allowed me write books I'm happy with and hit my deadlines for about thirty-one years now.

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**A Giggly Scene, A Wicked Secret... and I Love You,**

# Tomorrow

written by Holly

July 15, 2022

By Holly Lisle

No big secret that these books are set in a decidedly sideways version of the Ohio town in which I live. I love this place, and I'm having a wonderful time building some seriously wacky shit into what is in reality a lovely old town with a great history, and some fine and friendly people.

**Today I got to pull out one of the oldest tropes in SF** (because I have no compunction about playing with elements of science fiction in my fantasy series, so long as I can then twist them straight back to fantasy), and I laughed my ass off when I realized how I was going to use the damn thing.

I left a note in the chapter so that I remember tomorrow the revelation I had right at the end. I've learned NEVER to trust myself to remember tomorrow's cool thing if I don't leave a note.

Fortunately, Scrivener is great for letting you leave notes.

And I'm so excited to write what I realized that I was tempted to keep going.

So... 1250 words exactly today, and 64,003 for the book, and I'm five chapters from the end. *And I love, love, LOVE the words I got today.*

**NOW, however, it's on to the next thing.** I have seven tons of lesson reminders yet to build to get everything over on [HollysWritingClasses.com](http://HollysWritingClasses.com) working the way it's supposed to... and I need to get at least half a ton of them built today.

So with words finished, and the start of today's headache already moving in like clouds before an oncoming storm, I'm

going to go do lesson reminder links in lesson reminders for writing classes for at least one hour.

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