

Catching up on the updates: Starting at page 291 on the Ohio 2 revision

written by Holly

August 4, 2022

By Holly Lisle

The last couple days have been hectic, and I've managed to miss blogging twice.

But I've gotten my revision pages every day. This morning, I'm starting the write-in revision on page 291. The last page in the novel is 431. I won't get there today, but I'll make good headway toward getting there, and might be able to wrap up the Book 2 revision tomorrow.

Yesterday's revision was a lot of fun – I hit a scene I'd forgotten writing, and laughed my ass while working my way through it. My poor main character is under attack by enemies both hidden and right out in the open, and yesterday the bad guys tried to pull a bait-and-switch on her.

This was stuff I'd forgotten having written, so it was all fresh to me, and reading through it, I had a fair amount of stuff to fix.

BUT the scenes I worked on took me by surprise in multiple places, and made me laugh out loud once.

Today I'm onto the next section, and I'm pretty sure stuff gets darker. But when you write in flow – that is, when your brain is making up the story as you go and your fingers are pretty much taking dictation – you don't labor over words, so when you come back to them, you're as surprised as readers will be by what happens next.

Therefore... <evil grin> I'm looking forward to discovering what else my writing brain did while I wasn't looking.

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To manuscript page 228 on the type-in

written by Holly

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Today was tough. I had a LOT of hand-written stuff that had to be typed in, and a number of existing pages that had to be either heavily re-written or deleted entirely.

Writing-wise, it was a good day, in that I love this story and the way all the pieces are coming together. But it was a LOT of work.

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74 pages of revision progress on Ohio 2

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

The words went really well. Don't know how many I added today – but it was a fair number. And I like what I got.

I'm very grateful I've got a weekend starting, though. I'm tired, and I'll be grateful for two days of when I don't have to do anything writing-related.

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OHIO 2 REVISION: Made it to manuscript page 134 of the Ohio 2 type-in.

written by Holly

August 4, 2022

By Holly Lisle

And in this particular set of chapters, I've managed to make myself cry a couple of times.

The fixes in this section have been mostly small (typos, spellos, extra spaces), and the couple of bigger changes let me add a bit more emotion to the terrible thing that my main character is discovering.

It was a very, very good writing day – and I LOVE this world and the bits of story I got to work on today.

But now... forums, and then off to do the Live In The Real World stuff.

Some days go more smoothly than others. Ohio Two Revision

written by Holly

August 4, 2022

By Holly Lisle

This is such a weird job. Going through the type-in revision of Book Two this morning, I both laughed my ass off and then cried typing in the same scene. That particular LONG scene, now revised, held up pretty well from when I wrote Ohio 2, though I had a couple of complex fixes due to a series-wide story physics decision I made while writing the first draft of Book 3.

When I hit the revision of the third novel, that particular story physics problem will go away.

For now, fixing it is a big pain in the ass.

STORY PHYSICS has absolutely nothing to do with the science of physics. It's just the rules you decide to abide by when writing your fiction – and halfway through this series, I made a big decision to change how my MC can do a particularly difficult part of her job.

These rules have to do with story tone, and with the ways that things can or cannot happen, and in this case, they're important to *maintaining the funny*...

There are certain elements that, when you introduce them into your fiction, require that the stories you're writing then be read seriously, because those elements will ALWAYS be read as serious.

These are weird books. I hurt my characters a LOT... and a lot of what goes on in the books is deeply meaningful to me, and I hope will be to the eventual readers, too.

But my underlying tone in the world is humorous, and I had some things in the first draft of BOOK TWO that broke that. That took me out of the laughter in places where I didn't want that to happen.

So... today that big change in story physics went in. I'm pretty sure by the time I was writing BOOK THREE, I'd already identified the necessary change in nature of the physics, and wrote that book and the ones following it to use the necessary new version of the rules.

But today had some twiddly bits and some finicky fixes, and I have a headache from keeping all the details straight.

So I'm going to check in on the forums, and then call it a day.

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So today I start the type-in of the Ohio 2 Revision

written by Holly
August 4, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I was up at six, (when you're fasting, it's weirdly easy to roll out of bed at the crack of dawn and be through the shower, done with the first cup of coffee, before seven AM... and at my desk and finished with necessary work emails and the one help desk ticket only I could do not long after that.

So now I'm on to Ohio Two... The TYPE IN.

I open the manuscript, I drag the big-ass pile of paper over to my right, look at my three big URGENT!!! sticky notes tacked to the right side of my computer screen (the one about Derovi, the one about the absolutely necessary weapons change, and the one about the Hosho) and I get ready to write.

By writing the five novels back-to-back-to-back without going back to re-read the previous books, I've done some interesting things.

- I changed both world and story physics as I got a better feel for how to set hard limitations on the magic
- I had better ideas that I leapt into the middle of that now must have some antecedents built up front
- I created some characters at the end who now need to be worked into the beginning (or at least into books two and three)
- And, working my way through from the beginning now, I did one thing at the end of Book Five that I'm probably going to have to smash with a hammer. Or at least give a MUCH better reason for its existence.

All of this is standard shit for any revision. It's just that I've never revised five novels back to back before with none yet in print (meaning I have the FREEDOM to change stuff at the beginning, and am not stuck with worldbuilding that I regret locking me into story physics that was too unlimited and too open).

The best thing any novelist can do to get good, tight stories is to build good, tight limitations into the worldbuilding.

If anything can happen, nothing matters.

If just about everything is impossible, you can get your character embedded deeply in the swamp with the quicksand, the alligators, the poisonous snakes, and the half-starved, injured panther with a taste for human flesh, and have helluva lot of fun making your character work for his escape.

THAT's what I'm doing today. (None of the stuff includes South Florida swamps or wildlife, though. This is all Pure Ohio™.)

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Just finished the write-in revision of Ohio 2 – so...

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I like it. I had to make one BIG change because I had a revelation when writing the first draft of Book 3 that had to be retrofitted into Book One and Two–

And while I haven't read Three since I wrote it, I think I had that revelation at the very beginning of Three. Which, if I'm remembering correctly, means I just finished with the BIG retrofit, which was all about the use of technology and What We Don't Do.

I'm not necessarily remembering correctly. There might be a

bit more of the early error I made and just finished ripping out of Book Two. If so, by the time I hit Book Three, it will be a damned easy fix.

But... ANYWAY...

I'd been away from the Book Two story long enough that it was like someone else wrote it. That means I got to be objective about stuff I screwed up (and there's always stuff I screw up in first draft).

It also meant that when I hit the funny bits, I didn't know they were coming, and there were some places where I laughed out loud.

This is a good sign. That stuff stays.

So now I'm going to print out the manuscript for Book Three.

And oh... on printing out the manuscript, since I was so utterly grumpy about my Mac and my LaserJet Pro M404n failing to communicate with each other...

Matt's words were running through my head a few days ago where I decided to type in a replacement scene rather than handwriting it. They were, "I just plugged it in and it worked." This was on his Windows computer.

And I thought... yeah. That's how Apple computers used to work, too. What if they still do?

So I deleted the updated Official Driver I'd downloaded from the Official Hewlett Packard site. Just wiped the damn thing out.

Turned my printer on, hit "Print" in Scrivener, let my Mac find find the plugged-in printer on its own and identify it...

And guess what...

IT JUST WORKED.

I'm guessing it's gonna be a hot day in Hel when everyone's a teetotaler before I override my Mac with a company's 'official driver' again.

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Today I hit a messy part of the manuscript...

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I had a small fight with myself over whether to keep two short-term characters and the scene that included them, and after some struggle and bouncing my arguments around with myself, I let them stay.

They tie into an earlier incident, and my conclusion with them in this book does offer some promise that today's incident can offer some spiffy repercussions in books down the road.

Lot of handwriting in today's work. Am now down to the BOTTOM of page 287 on the manuscript, with 431 total in the book.

I am very, very happy with Book 2 to this point. But now...

On to the rest of the day's work. ☐

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Character Paranoia, and the State of Revision

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

I'm past the halfway mark on the read-through-note-taking process on Ohio 2.

I have a lot of the first draft that I'll be able to use as is.

That's good. I have written novels where I discovered the first draft was *The Story I Don't Want To Tell* (and could still run into that in Books 3, 4, or 5. It happens. Isn't fun when it does, but at least I know how to fix it.)

About sixty percent of the first draft so far is going to take middling rework (rethinking, taking out wrong directions, adding in the better direction I've come up with). About ten percent is just wrong, because what I discovered in books three, four, and five while I wrote them changed some of my understanding of my world.

And there's one story thread that I discovered while reading that gets expanded, because it's funny, it's scary, and I love it like bunnies.

The image is an unrelated keeper quote from the current Chapter 13, which is here because it happens to be on the page I'm starting with this morning.

But about Character Paranoia... (also related to the gray squirrel)...

My MC is suffering a bad case of it right now, because home looks like she remembered, but it doesn't work like she remembered... and she's discovering that the stakes attached to the house her grandma left her are a lot higher than... well... than a woman coming home to the small town she loved would hope.

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Made it to page 188 on the write-in revision of Book 2

written by Holly
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And I'm very, very happy with the way this book is going.

The story made me laugh multiple times, got me a bit teary-eyed once, and the plot through this part of it held together tightly still getting some necessary backstory into the mix.

And reading through and writing stuff in and making changes, I just keep being happy that this is the world I get to work in.

I know there are two big obstacles coming later in the book, but today's work was mostly small and cosmetic, and I made great progress and had a lot of fun.

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