

First snow in 30 years, and huge strides on the Dead Man's Party revision

[By Holly Lisle](#)

We knew yesterday there would be snow today.

I made Matt promise to get me up when it started – and around 4AM, the snow began. (He was editing someone's novel at the time, and he does that best when the house is quiet and he has it to himself.)

So he came and got me, and got the kid, who's 22, but had never seen snow.

And all three of us went out onto the front porch in the cold, just wearing our inside clothes, and for a few minutes we let the cold and the snow bite into us and bring us the ultimate expression of this season that was brand new to Joe, and which had been lost to me for the last thirty years.

We had one snow in North Carolina when the two older kids were little, and I took them outside in that so we could build snowmen and I could drag them around the street on a sled we only ever got to use that once.

So. Snow. We haz it, and I'm happy.

Got a TON done on the revision of Dead Man's Party this morning (working four straight hours because you lose track of the time will do that for you).

Some pieces of the beginning of the story connected for me, and made what's going to be the new middle a helluva lot darker.

The world itself is pulling in tighter – fitting together better. I love this book in spite of the fact that it keeps trying to turn into a series on me.

Dead Man's Party is and needs to be a one-off. It doesn't fit into my Ohio universe, and it doesn't need to leak into its own larger world.

But I do love the damn thing, in spite of its expansionist tendencies.

So... with fiction done for today, and having gone WAY beyond my planned page count, now I'm starting into wrapping up the upgrade of Lesson 1 of HTRYN.

It's taking longer than anticipated. But that happens to, and the final class will be worth the extra effort.

Onward then, while happily at home with snow.

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MONDAY. Ugh. But words in spite of that

[By Holly Lisle](#)

The chaos has expanded.

My writing time has contracted.

In spite of which, I got 1136 NEW words on the Dead Man's

Party revision, today, which came out to half a scene.

At the moment, it's going to have to do, and I'm glad I at least got some words, even if I didn't get the 2000 I wanted.

Chaos, after all, will not be circumvented.

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Dead Man's Party Revision: Quick, short, and NO Friday snippet

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Way too deep in stuff right now to dig through and find a snippet. I apologize.

Got 2000 words, did NOT finish the chapter revision, so next week I'll still be working on Chapter 10.

But I'm happy with what I got.

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Back to Words: The Dead Man's Party Revision

[By Holly Lisle](#)

The last few days have been wordless because of the ongoing chaos, which still has to get a lot worse before it can start getting better.

Today, though, I managed to write Chapter 9 – 1956 words. Again because this is still inside the first twelve chapters where I had not yet figured out the story I was telling or where and when it took place, these were all brand-new words, and from the POV of Laurie, the brand-new character who picks up a part of the story I needed but mostly missed in the first draft – that of the Caravan Volunteer.

I like her. She's too young for the job she's taken, but she's tougher than her years. And she's going to be a very cool secondary hero.

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Dead Man's Party – Cali on the day after

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Still all new words in the type-in revision. Today was a brand-new Chapter Eight.

Five, Six, and Seven were three different takes on the same

event – the point where things go from “wow, that was pretty bad” to “okay, the world has now officially fallen apart.”

Chapter Eight brings in the character who WAS my primary protagonist in the first version, now named Cali (folks who have taken [How to Write a Novel](#) will know her as Amanda).

Today, I got to play around inside her head a little, to see how she’s been coping after the Fall, and to see how she’s planning on dealing with the novel’s Big Bad (nod to Joss Whedon for the term).

I like what I got.

Personal stuff is still chaotic.

The only way out is through. So I’m head down, pushing through.

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DMP Revision – Friday, and I’m running long... by an estimated 30,000 words [FRIDAY SNIPPET]

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I knew this would happen.

The raw first draft of the novel was 50,718 words in length.

I figured during my read through revision that I'd add 10,000 words (because in revision, I always end up adding words – my first drafts are thin).

So I thought, *Hey, I'll shoot for 60,000, but I'll give myself a little extra elbow room on this one, just because.*

So I set my top limit plan at 70,000 words.

As of today, if I continue as I'm going, the novel is going come in at 81,000 words.

Eighty. One. Thousand.

My line-for-scenes build-out gave me 34 chapters, same as the raw first draft.

But this time I know what's going on from the very beginning, I know the world I'm writing in, and a lot has to happen in each chapter to get me where I'm going.

I'm contemplating eliminating the three POV scenes for the villain – but that's still on the table. If I don't show him from his own POV, it's going to be significantly tougher for readers to understand WHY he's doing what he's doing.

Word count for today: 254 words. It meets my one-chapter-per-day revision schedule.

Those 254 words comprise one full scene from my villain's POV. It's my compromise for now. I'll do the villain POV scenes, but keep them short, tight, focused on his actions.

When this goes out to my bug-hunters, I'll get feedback on him, and work from there.

FRIDAY SNIPPET (this is my current opening to the novel).

[The Snippet Disclaimer: This is raw first draft, Copyright

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In the beginning, there was the Hero. And the Hero moved Heaven and Earth to create a place of Joy and Excitement, a retreat from the Suffering and Toil of Humanity. And the Hero declared that access to this Second World beneath the World – this glorious Underworld – should be made a human right given regardless of race, color, creed, or ability to pay to every human being on the planet.

And so it was done, and all of Humankind rejoiced.

Introduction to The History of The Underworld: The Authorized Edition, by Nathan Ardement

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Dead Man's Party Revision – Thursday – 2040 words to the gritty, mean truth

[By Holly Lisle](#)

A book with the title *Dead Man's Party* is going to have some dark spots, obviously.

It can't all be PARTY, can it?

Well, today I hit the place where my MC, now named Matt Stark, hit the one-year anniversary of the Fall of the Underworld. And the guy who owned the Underworld apparently has been carrying a grudge.

Today, he punched back.

While I kept writing and deleting, writing and deleting, what I finally ended up with is, I think, a good chapter.

It is however, a dark, mean, pointy chapter.

I'm still on target – one chapter revised to completion per day, thirty-six planned working days to complete the type-in revision. I'm planning to take weekends and some known upcoming Chaos Days off to maintain my health as I go through this.

I'll note that as with every other day this week, today's revision was 100% new words. Through Chapter 12, I'm expecting that.

But so far this week, I've written over 9600 new words. And I still have tomorrow's 2000-ish to add to the count.

I'm now tired WITH a headache. So I'm going to do the rest of today's bullet journal list, and then go lie down.

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Dead Man's Party Revision – Wednesday, and the NEW character arrives.

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Today, just like Monday and yesterday, was 100% new words. 2115 of them at final count, probably about twice that many that I actually wrote to get the ones I kept.

Everything I wrote today required new settings, new names, a completely different starting point – every single word was brand new.

So what makes this a revision, rather than a different first draft?

The fact that this time through, I know exactly where I'm going and why, what I have to accomplish with each chapter to get it to the end that I know is coming, and what each scene has to do.

I have my provisional outline, the weight of an entire first draft and entire write-in revision and the brutal crucible of the week spent in the Monastery building my focus outline.

All the crud fell away from the story when I did that, and what I'm writing now is stronger. Better.

Still going to have to have a deep edit by Matt, still going to have to be bug-hunted by my bug hunters.

But... even though every word is new, this is pure final revision, and I've been here before with other books.

So...

Today, my Goddess of the Underworld had help from the new

secondary character I realized during revision I was going to have to bring in to show the world through the eyes of a normal human being who had been one of those most harmed by the world before the Apocalypse.

I ended up writing about twice as many words as I kept. Had to keep tossing out the “As you know, Bobs” that tried to creep in.

But it was a good writing day.

Now onto the next stuff.

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DMP Revision Tuesday – 3038 new words, brand-new second chapter started and finished

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Today was another good writing day.

100% new material, but it flew because in this revision, the whole thing is now growing out of everything I discovered in the read-through and write-in revisions of the first draft.

Added a couple hundred words to yesterday’s chapter, but everything I wrote yesterday still worked this morning.

Everything else was the start to finish of Chapter 2.

My Line-for-Scene outline is holding together. My characters

are stepping up, doing more in this version than they did in the first one. They're deeper, have more going on, have actual pasts.

And this version of the story is starting darker, meaner. I think this is happening because now I know what brought all of them to this point... and because I'm starting at the exact right point, in the instant before "the way things are now" collapses and all hell breaks loose.

This is a post-apocalypse in which the folks in the middle of it don't yet realize that the Apocalypse has come. That's the second shoe.

Right now, only the first shoe has dropped.

And this time through, the story means more to me. It's scarier, closer to the bone – because this time, I know how it ends, and I know what has to happen before it gets there. This time, there's no writing into the dark, no guessing.

This time, I already know how dark the darkness is going to get.

Things happen in ways that I don't expect, but they're pieces of a puzzle I've already seen.

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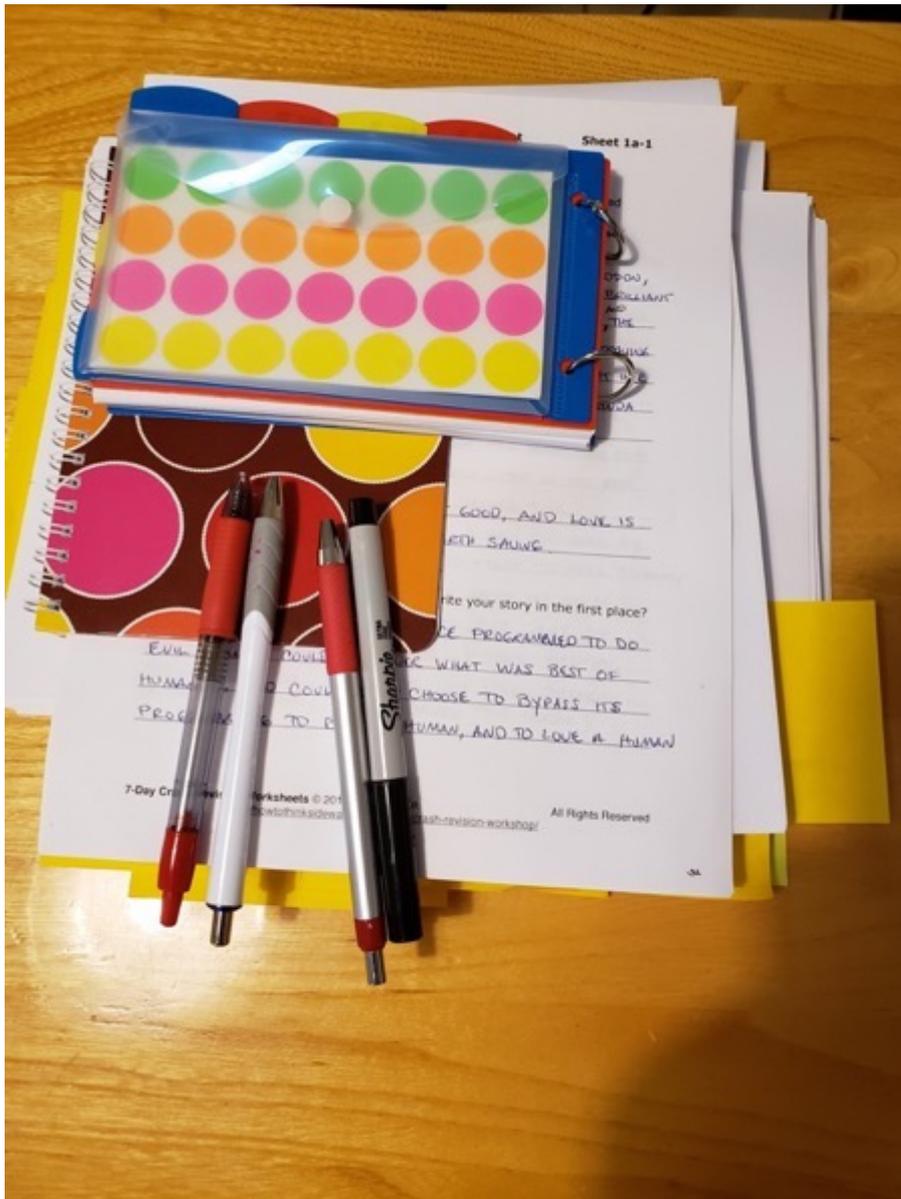
Dead Man's Party – The Write-

In Revision is done.

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Have been working on the read-through/write-in revision of Dead Man's Party for the past month or so. Finished it today after a four-hour hard push.

So the next step, which starts tomorrow, is to build the color-coded index card line-for-scene, which is my PLAN for



FIXING IT.

That should anywhere between a day or two and a full week of heavy lifting.

Since I couldn't find any of my favorite index cards, I'm improvising with some plain white ones that I had in a neat little Oxford ring binder, and color tabs I located in one of my "Office Supply" drawers that I'll stick on the right edge.

*These colored tabs** indicate :

- **GREEN: No changes or small changes** – Up to 24% of the scene needs to change
- **YELLOW: Moderate changes** – 25% to 49% of the scene needs to change
- **ORANGE: Big changes** – 50% to 74% of the scene needs to change
- **RED: BRUTAL OVERHAUL** – 75% change up to toss scene, write something completely new.

I might have two or three green cards.

I already know I have three or four red cards.

In between, I'm going to be living in the yellow-to-orange zone, and I'm betting I'm going to end up with MORE orange.

I'll show you the card outline when I get it built, and give you the actual Scene Count and Damage Report. Being realistic rather than hopeful, it will probably take me the rest of the week to get this done, and MAY run over. I'm out of practice, and this is a process that gets easier the more often and more FREQUENTLY you do it.

Maybe the Inspiration Fairy will land on my head and hit me with its vicious little mallet. If that happens, this will go faster.

BUT...

The thing you want to avoid at all costs during your revision read-through and write-in is to make the discovery – after your first draft has cooled off – that the novel is nothing you want to finish: that you don't care about the people, the

conflict, the world, the twists.

And that didn't happen.

Even in the midst of the wreckage I love this. Love it much more than I thought I would. Revising it is going to be a big, hard, dirty job. But it's SO going to be worth it.

And this is the ONLY thing I'm going to be working on (excluding the necessary stuff of paying bills, answering emails, spending time on the forums, and dealing with the nearing Big Chaos).

This gets half or more of every workday until both the revision replot and the final type-in are done.

This part can take a long damn time. Or it can go quickly. And I am a lousy judge of which way any particular revision is going to fall.

I just know, though, that I'm going to love doing this one.

*The colored index card process is part of [How to Revise Your Novel](#).

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