

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 Holly Lisle and All Rights Reserved. Do not quote, review, or bug hunt. The contents of this snippet are subject to change, and during revision I will not see any problems you find here.]

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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The Ohio Series – N1: When magic goes privately public... And a FRIDAY SNIPPET

By Holly Lisle

Today's word's flew. And I love what I got – My cop decided that the only way she was going to be able to win the assistance of the people she needs to have help her is to tell them the truth.

Followed by realizing that she CAN'T tell them the truth. It's too impossible.

All she can do is show them.

So that's what happened today.

For the snippet though, I'm pulling out something from earlier in the first draft.

The Snippet Disclaimer: This is raw first draft, copyright Holly Lisle and all rights reserved. Do not quote, review, or bug hunt. The contents of this snippet are subject to change, and during revision I will not see any problems you find here.

The town itself was lifting my spirits. No one loitered on street corners. There were folks out doing things – but they were moving the way people do in the cold. With purpose. With destinations. It wasn't a town that would give a cop like me much to do, but I thought it would make a great vacation

spot. Go to Grandma's. Sit on the porch swing for a week in summer and just watch people not being criminals.

And then I felt that chill again.

That certainty that something was wrong – that someone was watching me, and that something big, bad, and potentially deadly was about to go down.

I had the bag slung over my right shoulder.

Was armed, but the gun was under my coat, concealed, and I was going to have to drop the bag to go for it. I was regretting the purchase of two jars of jam in class containers.

I could sense rapid movement across the street – not on the sidewalk, but behind the houses, through back yards, over fences. And then I stopped myself with one simple question.

How? How was I sensing this?

There was no noise.

I could see no movement – and the chain link fence my mind insisted the something that had climbed over had not made the tiniest sound when the person my brain insisted had gone over it moved.

Out loud I said, "Yeah. Definitely need a damn vacation."

And heard something snicker behind me.

When I turned, of course there was nothing there.

The Ohio Series: Novel 1 – Friday snippet (a day early) that might not make the final version

By Holly Lisle

I'm going to note that the urban fantasy series I'm writing operates around the importance of trade.

That it's an old system, and that it operates across multiple dimensions.

And that my protagonist is a cop, and the guy she's working with is... difficult to get a handle on.

With that set-up, this is so offbeat and was so unexpected that it might have to come out of the final draft. It might not fit once I've done the final worldbuilding. But with the usual caveats:

This is rough, raw, first draft; it undoubtedly contains errors, and I do NOT make corrections from this draft; this material is copyrighted to me; do not quote or use in reviews...

The set-up is that my protagonist's ally is explaining why he had to change his identity. Here's the snippet...

"Building a network up from nothing is a helluva lot of work, though, and let me just say that the rewards offered by this particular world were... not enticing."

"Prospective bride not pretty enough?"

"You ever see Star Wars?" he asked me.

"Sure."

"She looked a lot like Princess Leia, minus the sticky-bun hairdo. And was a real princess."

"Then what was the problem?"

"She was a real princess. And a cannibal. She'd had two previous prospective bridegrooms killed and cooked when they failed to live up to her expectations."

Every once in a while, the words that come out of someone else's mouth are so utterly ludicrous that it doesn't even matter if they could be true. Or might be horrible. The shock value of them catches you, and you crack.

I just lost it, right then, right there. Laughed my ass off. Had tears running from my eyes, had to excuse myself to go blow my nose.

When I got back, he was staring at me, an accusatory expression on his handsome face. "That wasn't a joke."

"Dude," I said. "Cannibal princess. I'm sorry, but I keep seeing Princess Leia cooking Han Solo and serving him with cranberry sauce."

Yeah. It's definitely out there.

In other updates, the Sweater From Hell required a complete rip back of the sleeve I was starting here.

Too much flipping of the whole sweater while knitting the sleeve in.

So now I'm doing it this way...



Faster, lighter. Remarkably, however, the 2/2/8 stitch pattern is still just as inconceivably frustrating.

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The Ohio Novel: 1541 words,

and the Friday Snippet

By Holly Lisle

Today started with me building the **How to Write a Novel** class bonus.

I'm demonstrating my method for planning and then writing novels with multiple viewpoint characters and multiple conflicts. The demo uses four POV characters, and eight concurrently running plots, which probably wasn't as complicated as the series for which I devised the technique – *The Secrets Texts: Diplomacy of Wolves, Vengeance of Dragons, and Courage of Falcons*.

Very happy with the way the lesson turned out. I have the video heading for the classroom next, and have the audio off to the transcriptionist now, and should have video, transcript, and anything else I can throw into it into the classroom by the middle of next week.

Then I wrote. Today's words were okay, but not what I want to put into the Friday snippet. This... this is what I want to show off today...

The Friday Snippet

The Snippet Disclaimer: *This is raw first draft, copyright Holly Lisle and all rights reserved. Do not quote, review, or bug hunt. The contents of this snippet are subject to change, and during revision I will not see any problems you find here.*

There was a nice little local coffee shop half a block from

the library with a good view of the street and my car. The guy, who had not yet given me his name, and I, who had not given him my name, had a tiny pissing contest over who got to sit facing the door.

"I'm a cop and I'm armed," I said under my breath, so softly I was afraid he wouldn't hear it.

He had good hearing.

"So," I said, "You have a name?"

"Professor Duncan."

"I think naming a kid Professor is a shit decision. It limits his career choices."

He didn't laugh.

The sigh with which I followed the silence was heavy.

"I'm Officer Gage, Miami PD," I said.

At that, his mouth quirked in a half-smile. "Touché."

I shrugged. Gave the waitress my order. Coffee black.

He ordered the same – no frappichino, no goopy latte, no whipped cream or flavors. Which didn't fit with the turtleneck and the tweed, but did fit with that little martial artist stand-up he'd done.

So I said, "Want to take another run at the name thing?"

"Agren. Agren Duncan."

"Victoria Gage."

A little flash of surprise showed, but he hid that quickly enough.

Followed by, "She mentioned you," which he said after

thinking about it a couple seconds too long. He tried to make it sound casual, but it wasn't. I could tell from the tension in his voice, the aversion of his eyes when he said it, the way every line of his body signaled tension that it wasn't casual at all.

I halfway expected him to attack me, but instead, he met my gaze. Said in voice filled with phony casualness, "You have a chance to inventory her basement yet?"

Holy shit.

What exactly did he know about her basement?

"Some of it," I told him.

"Hmm. You probably ought to check the dates on everything in her freezers. Some of it will go bad if it isn't used soon..." He looked me straight in the eyes and said, "Some of it might be going bad already."

And I was pretty sure he wasn't talking about the venison or the ducks or geese or anything else the local hunters had been providing for her.

But I wanted to be sure.

"I might have to go step by step through everything in there."

He nodded once. Body language, voice, everything changed right then. It was like part of him relaxed – and another part of him tensed up. "Not without backup," he murmured.

"Gut check suggested the same thing."

Finally, I now have to get a bunch of stuff ready for The Summer of Fiction Writing, which officially goes live tomorrow at ten AM ET, but which is already open for site members.

If you want to join us and get writing done this summer with other folks who have set some great goals...

Login or create your free account, then come hang out with us in the SOFW Forum.

The official Classroom won't open until tomorrow morning (lots of downloads and links in there), but you can get your goals put together today, and see what other folks are planning.

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The Ohio Series: Surprises and weirdness.

By Holly Lisle

Yesterday was chaos, site issues over on HollysWritingClasses.com, and constant interruption, so while I worked on the book, I didn't hit my word goal. I did get 1391 words, which is still good.

Today, though... Today was pure joy. I got 2542 words that just flew off my fingertips, and made me laugh as they hit the page.

Lemme give you a chunk of my morning (*with the caveats – this is copyrighted to me, don't quote, this is first draft and subject to change, don't report errors because this is raw first draft*):

There was a smaller box inside. It was bright green, with bold orange letters that said, "Instant Mover in a Box" and

the contrast between the green and the orange made my eyes water just a little bit.

The picture on the box showed a can with a partially lifted lid, and suitcases, furniture, clothes, and other things pouring out from the inside in a steady stream. I raised an eyebrow.

Lifted the smaller box from inside the bigger box. It had a decidedly gag-gift look to it.

There was a note taped to one side of the box which read, Open this when you're ready to be done with us. LOL! Love, The Gang

I grinned.

Somebody had gone shopping at Spencer's.

Cops collectively have a weird sense of humor – it's born of seeing humanity at both their absolute best and their absolute worst, from knowing what bullshit looks like from wading through it all day every day, from knowing that any moment of any day could be the instant that something benign goes bad and you end up dead without warning.

So whatever my comrades in arms back in Miami had put in the can was, I was pretty sure, going to jump out at me.

Or was going to smell terrible.

Or was going to make an incredibly loud noise.

Probably all three.

I chuckled.

Opened the box, lifted out the can, which did weigh just about enough to have something springy and noisy inside that was going to explode out at me when I opened it.

Again... not my first rodeo.

I sat on the couch, wedged the can between my knees, aimed the lid part toward the imaginary co-worker who'd bought it for me – probably Sarge, who fucking loved practical jokes – and lifted the lid.

And two things happed at the same time, neither of which included a spring-loaded giant paper snake or confetti.

A small, adorable, very alive kitten jumped out of the can.

Upstairs in Mom's old bedroom, something exploded.

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Friday Snippet: Cady goes home again...

By Holly Lisle

Here's the short set-up. Cady has picked up a crew of talented misfits to help her stop the pending genocide of humanity by a deadly group of outsiders—and she's started her fight to save humankind on her homeworld of Cantata, and in her home city of Meileone.

Cady is currently in the company of the enemy, and once again in disguise.

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anywhere or in any format. Thanks.

So my guide, who introduced himself a Yorg, and who looked like he couldn't believe his luck, led me toward the main gravdrops, giving me a well-practiced spiel on how to drop the first time without bumping into other people, how to maneuver through traffic, how to change lanes. He would, he told me, hold my hand.

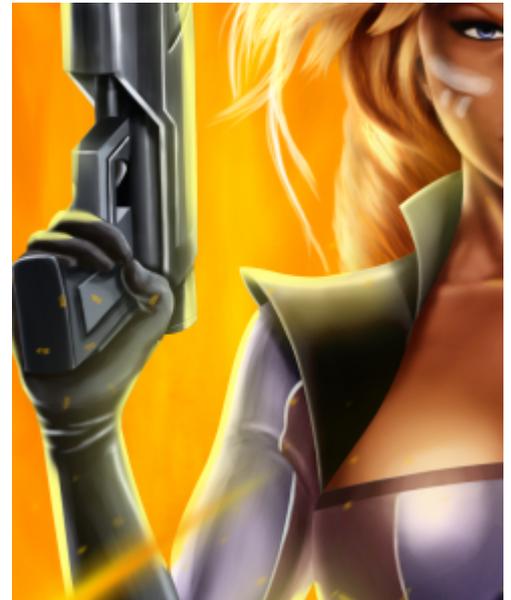
I let him, and we dropped in the lane for the timid, new, and lost, while all around me citizens zipped through the drops like fish in fast water, dancing through the beautiful maneuvers I yearned to embrace again. Once you know how to use them, the gravdrops are like flying from the top of the world to the bottom and back. I missed them, the way I missed skies made of stone and strellitas, the way I missed the comfort of enclosed space, the way I missed a city that strove always to embed the newest technology within itself, that embraced progress, that forever pushed through the barriers of what humans were and did to what they could become and might do. Meileone was in my blood, and when I dared sneak back at all, it sang the lullabies of my childhood to me, and made me ache to stay.

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WARPAINT Snippet: Cady goes home again

By Holly Lisle

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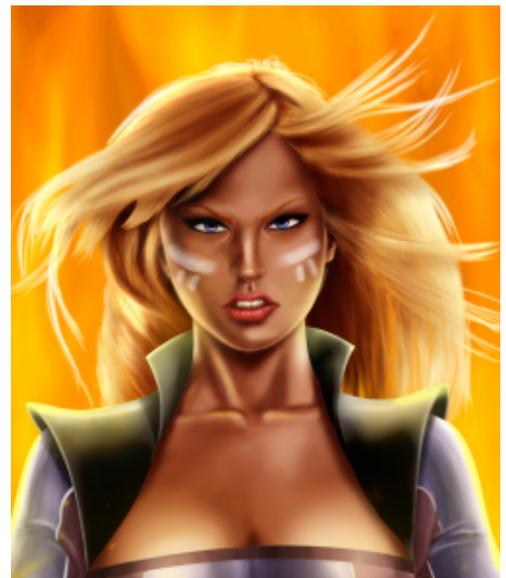
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Saturday Snippet, and My first week back to full-time fiction.

By Holly Lisle



She's back...

I had a blast this week—and fairly late yesterday, I realized

why.

It is the first week in several years where all I did was write.

I did not build site infrastructure, work on website design, put together HTML for lessons, prep courses for formatting, design book covers, design lessons, test plugins, install plugins, upload self-pubbed work or build Kindle, Nook, or iTunes pages for the same, or anything else. (Well, okay. I did student support...but if I don't do that, students complain. :D)

But this week, for the first time in years, I was just writing, revising, and...writing.

On ***Cadence Drake: WARPAIN***, I started with 21,456 words, and finished with 28,424 (roughly 8,000 words for the week) and the realization that at some point I saved over the final version of the plot cards I'd put together for the book. So the week ended (and will begin) with me replotting the remainder of the novel. Got most of it yesterday, have a few scenes left to do.

On ***CREATE A CHARACTER CLINIC, 2nd Edition***, I got through 178 pages of in some places HEAVY revision, and will finish up through the final manuscript page (p. 222) this weekend.

Some of the weekend revision and ebook formatting I may do while Isaac (as a tropical storm, a depression or whatever it turns into once it finishes messing around over water) either brushes west of us or, if the track shifts eastward, drops in for a visit. We have the edges of outer bands now. But mostly this one looks likely to miss us.

And the snippet.

From the 8,000-ish words I got, I decided you'd have fun with these:

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"Do you understand what happened?" I asked him.

"You made me want you."

"Yes. You have to understand there's something in me now—it might be something that has always been there that I never noticed, or it might be something new that came with the nanovirus—and that something wanted me to own you. To make you my captive. My slave. It wanted me to use you."

He tugged against my grip. I did not release him. I wasn't done making sure he understood.

"You're going to be in this cage today. You're going to be dealing with all of this—you and the others. You're going to find things in yourselves that are going to want to get loose. And at some point, you and I and everyone else doing this is going to have to let set our worst demons loose in order to win over the [SPOILER DELETED]."

I released his wrist.

He studied me. "How bad is it?"

"It isn't," I told him. "It feels wonderful. It feels like feeding the part of you that's been starving, giving it the best meal ever."

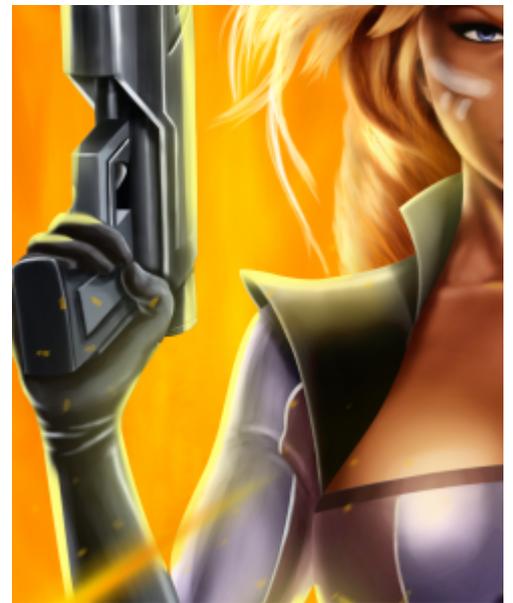
"That's a problem," he said.

And that was an understatement.

WABWM: Official First Day, and a Snippet

By Holly Lisle

I'm posting the official WABWM thread for the day. If you're playing (or want to join—you can start any time you're ready) the thread for the day is here.



<http://howtothinksideways.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=254&t=6304>

Also if you're playing, bookmark this page:

Write A Book With Me Board Go to the board every day, and post your own run on the newest official topic—the one pinned to the top when you get there. That way, I'll see what you've written and be able to respond (after I'm done with my own writing). □

Finally, for folks who want to play Write A Book With Me, but aren't set up yet, here's how you get set up:

- Create a free membership. (link opens in new tab)
- Sign into the boards. (link opens in new tab)

- Introduce yourself, then find the Thread Of The Day, which will be pinned to the top of the board until I post the new one.

For readers, who may or may not find the word counts interesting, I'll post snippets here.

The current novel-in-progress is **WARPAINT**, and today I have a snippet, also posted on the board...but if you just want the snippet, I've posted it below, too.

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And then it changed.

Pain turned to pleasure, fire to delicious heat, fear and anguish to incredible, calm, centered certainty.

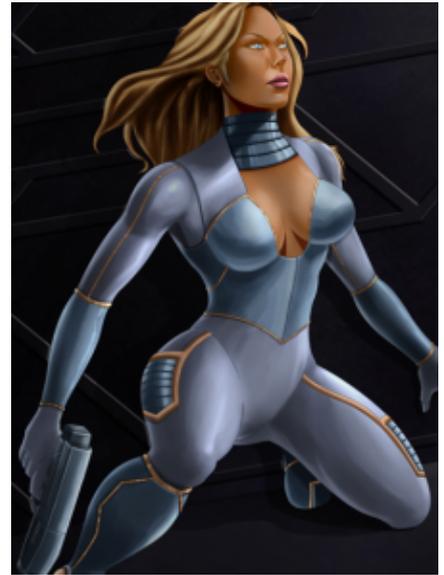
This was how I was supposed to feel. This was perfection. I opened my eyes, and everything lay before me in a flawless detail I had never before imagined possible. Every surface had a crystalline clarity that rendered it beautiful, no matter how mundane its origin or purpose.

The people around me were exquisite, their hair, skin, and features all seemingly crafted out of new materials so much finer and more delicately designed than human flesh had ever seemed to me.

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Friday Snippet: HTCB – An Innocent Bit of Deception

By Holly Lisle



Cady in Hunting the Corrigan's Blood

My mind twisted like a pretzel as I started working my way through the Law of Unintended Consequences while writing Cady and Badger in **Hunting the Corrigan's Blood**. People were trying to kill her, her employer was overpaying her for reasons she didn't find entirely convincing, and her built-in spy-cam had given her information that only made everything else more confusing.

Enter some new information that REALLY fouled things up...and an innocent bit of deception on Cady and Badger's part that is going to have a hellish backlash.

I keyed in the link to the navigation deck, and Badger's face floated in front of me. "Any luck?" he asked.

"A fair amount. I have an idea on where we can start looking for our client's ship. We need to get ready to run. Meanwhile, have you gotten any information on the holos?"

"The strangest information of all," he said. He looked weary and frustrated. "Whoever the three men were who came after you, they had the best security I've ever seen."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because according to all official records, none of the three of them have ever been here."

"What?!"

"Never. I've run the worm through every databank on Cassamir Station, and pulled the data stream from every security monitor. Hell, I located the security cam that shows the view of you and Peter Crane having lunch. It also shows the table where the three of them sat while you ate."

"So use that."

"You don't understand. They aren't at the table."

I felt my mouth drop open; I knew I looked like an idiot. Still, no one underrated the magical art of making yourself disappear more than I do. "You mean someone has completely cleared them out of every record in the station?"

"Yes."

"My God. That's impressive."

So the three men who had killed Sarah and who had nearly killed me had someone on Cassamir Station covering up for them. Someone well-placed enough to gain access to every security file on the station that included the men, and talented enough to erase the men from every record without leaving signs of tampering. "Could you do that?" I asked

Badger.

"Not a chance."

I nodded. I couldn't have done it either. "Connect into the VeCRA system and see if you can find any records on any of the three of them there. If they don't show up in VeCRA databases, we can spread out further."

VeCRA is the Verzing Community Regulatory Agency, the bureaucracy that keeps tabs on the loose coalition of settled planets in this sector of space. The other sectors have their own agencies that work with VeCRA; and the non-allied planets usually have their agencies (and those may or may not cooperate); and the fanatical confederacy, Oeoslong Legion, has its slew of agencies. Even if we searched through all of those databases, we still might not find our people, because settled space is too damned big for bureaucracy to keep under its thumb. There are scores of settled planets that opt for anarchy—they don't keep records; they don't pay dues; and they don't answer anybody's questions unless they want to. If our thugs were from one of those places, we would probably never run them down. Still, we had to look.

"Before you start the VeCRA search, though, I need you to make me some fuzzy, ugly digital two-D's from the doppler images, and I need them fast." I told him the shots I wanted, then added, "Mess them up some when you print them. Make them look like we got them from a ... oh, a Clarion MicroSure-Shot digicam, and make them look like we've enhanced the hell out of them." I paused for a second, thinking. "Be consistent with the angle. Something that someone could have obtained from long-range, or at least from outside the dining area, if that's the best we can do. I have an idea; find someone in Ferlingetta who could have taken them, and create the series from that person's viewpoint."

Badger grinned. "Invent an insider, huh?"

“Yes.”

“I’ll do it.”

“Send them via Gen-ID to Peter Crane as soon as they’re done ... and time is important, here. I told him they already existed. While you’re doing that, I’ll file our flight plan.”

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