

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 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 Do not quote, review, or bug hunt.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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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.

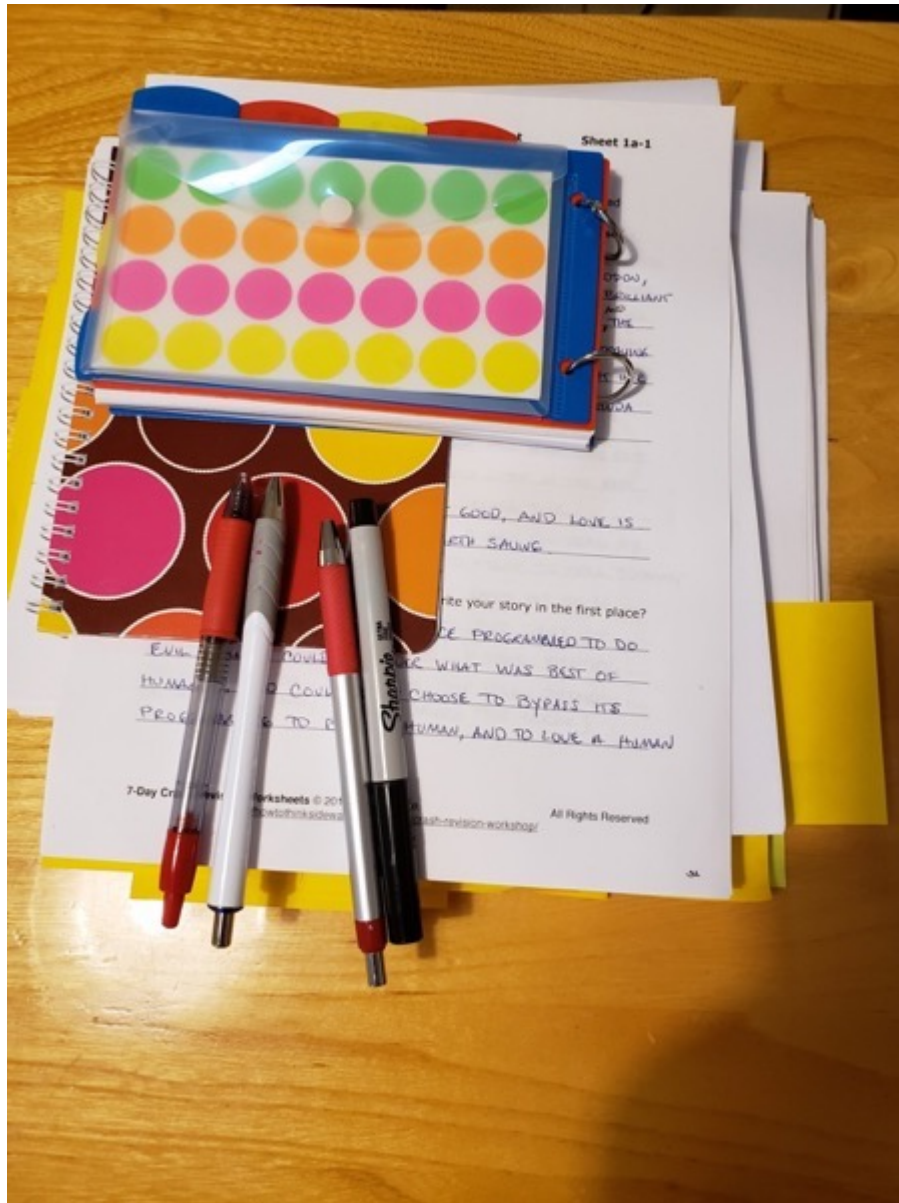
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Dead Man's Party – The Write-In Revision is done.

[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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First draft of The Ohio Series First Novel is DONE! Includes FRIDAY SNIPPET

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I did not expect to finish the first draft today. Thought it would take me a couple more days to get there, but while Becky and I were running ten-minute work sprints together, what had to be in there just clicked, two complete chapters flew off my fingertips, and all of a sudden, I have a done first draft in my brand-new Urban Fantasy world.

I wrote it using the same process I teach in *How to Write a Novel*, I had a blast doing it..

And now it sits in a corner of my hard drive for a minimum of one month while it cools down.

Because I need to NOT be wildly in love with it when I do the read-through. I have to be tired, and grumpy, and bored, and wishing I was someplace else. In THAT frame of mind, the good stuff with hook me in, but I will be unable to make excuses for the bad stuff.

But before I put it away for the requisite month (and possibly a bit more), I have the Friday Snippet for you.

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 FRIDAY SNIPPET

Now here I was with a cookie junkie who'd just heard there was a new dealer for his long-lost favorite drug, looking at me with eyes that were shining with need, that said he was jonesing pretty hard.

People.

"I could get you the ingredients so you could make them," he said. "If you told me what they were."

"Didn't Grandma give you the recipe so that you could learn how to make them yourself?"

I was watching him. I work the streets, I know what addiction looks like, and I was seeing a guy who'd gotten a hit of something that had sunk hooks into him and dragged him out on a cold, mean day to a dead woman's house in search of cookies. Nobody does that.

Nobody.

Only the look people get when you've pulled them over and they think they're about to pull one over on you was on old Mr. Yeager's face, and that cop sense kicked in and all of a sudden I knew this wasn't about cookies. It was... but there was a lot more here, and for some reason I didn't know, it was important.

Really important.

In no universe are cookies a big deal.

So this was something else. Something was wrong with my picture.

When in doubt, poke the problem with a stick.

"I'm not going to be baking cookies here," I said. "I'm just going to be going though the attic and the basement, clearing and cleaning, and then I'm going back home." When I said the word home, it sounded like a lie in my ears. No matter. I was watching his body, watching his eyes.

And I saw a whole lot of panicked crazy go skittering beneath the surface. "Could I buy the recipe from you?" he asked.

The answer to that question came out of my mouth unbidden, instantly, like someone had programmed it there. "Old family recipe," I said and shook my head.

And he hung his. "That's what she always said, too."

And though I could not understand what made me do it, I grabbed my metaphorical stick a little more firmly, and said, "Tell you what. Why don't you bring those papers by the house for me so I can look them over while I'm cleaning. If you do that, I'll think about making some more cookies."

When it came out of my mouth, I knew it was a mistake. No lawyer would say yes to that. There was no guarantee, there was no promise, there was nothing to pin down. It was an utterly one-sided deal.

"All right," he said, and sighed.

And that gut thing I had going said, Ding, ding, ding. We have a winner. Whatever Mr. Yeager is, he is not a lawyer.

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The Ohio Series – Basements Can Kill You

[By Holly Lisle](#)

In general, "what's in the basement" is a staple of scary stories.

They're easy to ignore, but you do so at your own peril.

Especially if you fail to notice the monster that really is down there in the glow-y green light waiting for you.

I'm at 59,777 words total, and got 2339 words total today (in spite of having to throw away about a thousand words.

Love, love, LOVE the twist that smacked me over the head today.

Not sure what I'm going to do for tomorrow's Friday Snippet. It has to be early stuff. I'll make sure it's fun.

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First Ko-Fi Prizes went out yesterday

[By Holly Lisle](#)

There was a certain amount of “seriously, you jest”-ness in the issues I had to overcome to get the autographed copies of *Character Clinic*, 4th Edition in the mail.

But the first prizes for my [Ko-Fi.com](#) funders are now on their way. Congrats again to the folks who won the first drawing, and thank you to everyone who's funding my writing.

Last month, by the way, I hit my \$640/month goal for funding two hours of fiction writing four days a week.

The funding went toward 16 hours of revision on *Dead Man's Party*, and 48 hours of first draft on *The Ohio Series: Novel 1*. I'm working four hours a day Mondays on *DMP*, and 4 hours a day Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday on *TOSN1*.

And making very nice progress.

So... New goal for this month is the same as it was last month. And I'm currently at 4%.

Today, I worked on the **How to Turn A Stand-Alone Novel into a Series** bonus for the **How to Write a Novel** class.

I thought it was going to be small. HA! I'm still fighting to keep it smallish.

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Wordcount doesn't reflect progress on the Ohio Series, Novel 1 today

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I built the first part of my series Octopus Map, uncovered the secret behind how the magic works, did a big rethink of a couple of items on my provisional outline, and if I only have 622 words of progress to show for that, it's okay. When I get back to this next week, I'll be on much sturdier ground.

I know how the magic works now. And WHY.

How and why are the core of the whole thing – and it's a very cool kind of magic, and something that's going to change my protagonist in ways she cannot yet even imagine.

The trick is to set a hard limit on what the main character can do so as to avoid "Superman Syndrome" in which the heroine

has a superpower for every problem.

Today I made sure that will never happen.

It was a good writing day.

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The Ohio Novel: Art of the Trade

[By Holly Lisle](#)

So... Tori's grandmother was a big fan of *The Art of War*.

Was something of a legend among the folks who trade between the stars.

Today was a fun day, as story bits came out of the woodwork at me, including a conspiracy of potentially biggish proportions.

After a couple of writing days where the story felt like it was meandering (this is the stuff you generally end up doing massive revision on), today's words flew, and brought with them a new piece of the magic I need the world to have.

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Not so Marketing Tuesday: Finished the BIG HTWAN bonus

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Did no marketing today. I had too much of a backlog, and in the middle of *The Ongoing Chaos*, I have to do what I can when I can...

So today I built the last pieces of the [How to Write a Novel](#) Graduate BIG bonus. This is *Interweaving Multiple Story Threads in Big, Complex Novels*.

I'm adding all the materials into the classroom now, so it'll take me another hour or so to get everything in place and the classroom opened up.

But if you've already graduated from the class, you can head into your classroom at [HollysWritingClasses.com](https://hollylisle.com), watch the video, download the transcript, go through the worksheets and the L0000NG lesson, and see how you put complex monster novels like *Talyn*, *Hawkspar*, and the *Matrin* series (*Diplomacy of Wolves*, *Vengeance of Dragons*, *Courage of Falcons*, and *Vincalis the Agitator*) together.

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