

Ohio 4: Big word count, weird scene – and now I'm in Chapter 5

By Holly Lisle

Urban fantasy is “where normal life and magic collide.”

Today's collision was big, fun, and above all, very strange.

I got 2339 words for the day (all new), and now have 15,906 total for the book, and did some heavy revision on the keeper scene I brought in yesterday.

I also deleted words, so I actually wrote more than what's showing.

BUT... I'm having a lot of fun with this scene, which is allowing me to bring in some creatures that are going to be both a blessing and a plague for my main character from now on.

And a plague and a blessing for the town in which she lives.

And... nah. I'm not going to give hints. But what I hoped would work is now working. And my scene tomorrow should be a lot of fun to write, too.

I'm going to leave it at that now, and go get my other stuff done. ☐

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Ohio 4: Net words while reworking and updating the moved text – 59 words net gain, 15,118 total

By Holly Lisle

I've worked through a section of the cut-and-paste stuff I pulled in from Book 3 yesterday. I've written a lot of words. I've deleted a lot of words. I have a net gain of 59 words that does not reflect the amount of work I've done – but I already knew it wouldn't.

Tomorrow will probably be a lot like today, because I'll still be in this section, which is long, and which has a LOT of stuff that needs to be fixed and rethought, some stuff that needs to go, and some things that I'll need to make up from scratch.

Working through moved text doesn't have the fun to it of letting me be able to show my work.

But this was worth saving, I'm still getting there.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Ohio 4: Friends, cannibals,

**and 4,475 words (of 1250
planned, plus how THAT
happened)... and 15,118 total...**

By Holly Lisle

I wrote about 700 actual words today.

Following which, I benefitted by having vastly overwritten a big chunk of Ohio 3, in which I leapt ahead and did a ton of stuff that actually needed to wait until this book.

When I realized, back in Book 3, that I'd gotten ahead of myself, I set those words aside (counting their loss from Book 3 when I did so)... and today, got to add ONE piece of that word count back in.

I'm not sure that I'll be able keep them all – but today, I had fun with money.

With the concept of money, and the concept of trade, and with people who understand TRADE versus those who understand MONEY, and the very nasty complications that can occur when these two incompatible groups of people collide.

And I'll get to have some more fun with that tomorrow... and will probably end up a few words down rather than a few words up in the process, because the gigantic scene I'd pulled out of Book 3 is 4860 words long, and I'm positive that I got wordy.

But for today, I'm done, and moving on to other things on my list.



Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Got more of one scene than I wanted, but... 10,652 words total, and 1265 for the day.

By Holly Lisle

Sometimes you write something knowing it's going to have to be edited down in revision – and today I ran long on a piece of my main character's past.

It was important, but I still have a pretty good idea that in revision, this is part of the book that will come out shorter.

But... got the words and while I'm running behind, now I have to get the other stuff.

Today was fun ... 1344 words, 8,173 total

By Holly Lisle

This morning, in spite of what felt like a hard start of my brain with its engine cold, once I got rolling, I flew.

The story took a turn that surprised me, even as it still took me right through the events I was planning. It just didn't present them to me in anything like the way I'd expected, and I didn't end up where I thought I would. I landed someplace better.

There are villains... and they escaped.

Good guys... and they were left empty handed.

And a discovery about the nature of a key player that I'm looking forward to continuing tomorrow, and that I damn near couldn't even pull myself away from today, because I discovered something so cool about, of all things... the owner of a private library that's sitting in my MC's house. And I wanted to find out the rest.

But I set limits on how much I write each day for very good reasons.

So I have **big** fun waiting for me in my end-of-the-week words. And I can't wait for tomorrow to see what happens next.

Special houses (may I never visit one on a bad day)... 1321 words of 1250 needed, 5573 total.

By Holly Lisle

Sometimes I scare myself.

I write words every day in a process where I give over a lot of control to my Right Brain Muse.

Small but important note: *Right-brain muses – parts of the brain that don't do much with words and spelling, but that do hold images and ideas and imagination – are theoretical, with the theory coming from studies done of people who had medically severed corpus callosa to stop intransigent seizures. It might very well be that with an unsevered corpus callosum, the brain is much more equitable in distributing its workload to both parts. I, however, like thinking of my left brain as the one that has the logic and reliably shows up for work every day whether we feel like it or not, while I like thinking that the right brain as the one infested with the nightmares and ghosts and really gruesome ideas for things to do to my poor characters that it finds disturbingly funny.*

Either way, there is a part of my brain that comes up with wicked plot twists, that scares me, that makes me laugh, and that makes me cry, even though all the stuff it's pitching at me is stuff it made up – stuff that never really happened –

and I try to put that part in charge of the writing as much as possible.

This morning, this part stepped into the scene I'd planned, muttered "Oh, honey, that's not even close to the worst thing that could happen in this situation" – and went to town.

Today I was almost a spectator to the words that rolled onto the page at ridiculous speed.

Today I scared myself.

No idea how much of this scene will survive in revision, but when my mind decided the bad guys were not going to win this round, it gave me something that I can see visiting me in nightmares for some years to come.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

NEVER GO BACK – Ohio 4, Day 2. Epic chaos begins. 1271 words for the day, 2945 total

By Holly Lisle

I'm making good progress.

I'm also making a mess – I tripped over part of the mess in the last section of Book 3 when grabbing details there to continue into Book 4, where I discovered that I had not cleaned up the ending of THREE quite as well as I remembered.

This, however, is where process matters.

The process for finishing a series on deadline when you have to do all five books at once so you can revised them together and release them in series order over five months is this:

Save revision and tinkering until all five books are complete in first draft.

That way, once you know how the series ends, you can go through all the previous books, bring them up to the current story as determined by the epic ending you discovered while NOT following your outline, and make all changes just once, rather than continually dropping back, tinkering, smoothing, and debugging every time you figure out something that is better to bring to the current novel.

Here's the thing.

If you don't set this rule, and then never succumb to the temptation to break it (just this once – HAH!), the better ideas YOU WILL HAVE in each book will constantly have you tinkering with all existing previous novels, just to keep everything updated and matching – and by always going back when critical bits of the story are constantly changing – you will become a slave to the “better idea”, and you will never manage to get all the way to the end.

And you will delete good shit that needs to stay – only you can't see it in the heat of “I need to fix this.”

Worse, every better idea dumps you into tinkering mode again. Over, and over, and over.

There will always be a better idea (including better ideas that turn out to be breathtakingly stupid, series-breaking nightmares).

There will always be a “reason” to go back and tinker with finished books.

I didn't. I won't.

All five books get finished in raw, buggy first draft first.

ONE BIG REVISION comes second.



Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

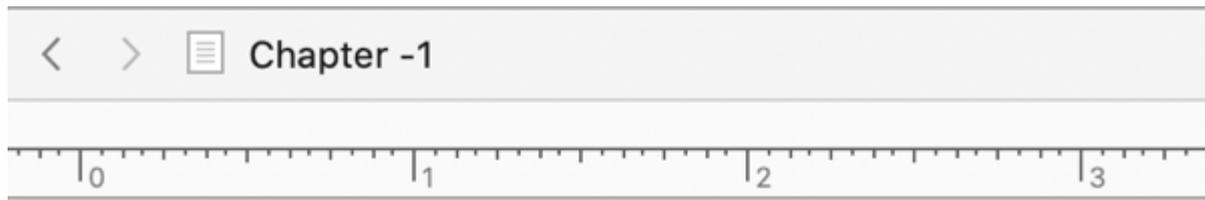
**Ohio 4 Begins! 1446 words,
and 1674 total.**

By Holly Lisle

I start each new novel with a template I built for myself.

It has my type styles (Courier 12, double space, first line indent, and thirty chapters all set up.

My pre-built Chapter 1 (I built it when I bought Scrivener, and it has survived ever since) looks like this.



CHAPTER 1

Something Clever Goes Here.

The little “Something Clever Goes Here” sentence beneath the CHAPTER 1 header never fails to amuse me when I open the new template... but I’m easily amused.

So today, before I started on the words, I transferred my entire line-for-scene outline to the Scrivener document, sentence by sentence, in to the thirty blank chapters.

And discovered that somehow I had managed to write thirty-one Scene Sentences, and all of them were important.

So I added a new Chapter 31.

I’m not sure where the extra chapter came from in the outline, but I’ll figure it out.

Meanwhile, the new blank document started with a word count of 228 – these are mystery words that I can’t find anywhere in the document.

Sooner or later, I’ll run across them and delete them. But for now, I wrote 1466 words (out of my planned 1250), and show 1674 total words in the novel.

I love the scene I got... and with it, I'm off to the races.



Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Finished all thirty Book Four sentences... Will start Chapter 1 tomorrow.

By Holly Lisle

So there it is.

I already know the outline is not perfect.

I already know that there are parts of it I will change as I

write them, that there are places where I will have better ideas, that there are places where I will decide a scene I've outlined is stupid – and will change it – and then will decide that I was right the first time, and go back in and do what I planned...

But this is the process – for me, anyway.

This is how my brain works... and I can't even say it's the way it works BEST.

It's just the way I've figured out that allows me to write first drafts that are good enough to keep while I revise them into the stories I wish I could have created right out of the gate.

I have something that has shape and form and that takes me from where I am to where I think I want to be, and that allows me the room to find better destinations (and the net to save the story when one of them turns out to be an imaginary bridge over a very real cliff).

Now I'll go through the rest of my list of things to do for today...

And tomorrow, I'll start on page one, word one of Ohio Book 4.

I'm excited. I always am.

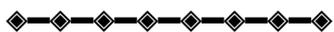


Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

I now have twenty-four of thirty Story Sentences written.

By Holly Lisle

Long haul – I've been at this since 6: 30 am when I got out of the shower.

Today a hard slog – I did a fair amount of deleting, twiddling, rethinking... walking in circles in the office talking out loud to myself and presenting both sides of the “how should I do this?” brainstorming and “why that won't work” opposition.

But today I got all the way through the BIG MESS of Book Four, and tomorrow I have just six sentences left in which to work out the chaos, mostly resolve the issues of this book...

And bring forward the one thing everyone missed that will form the CORE story for Book Five.

As work days go, I'll take it.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved