

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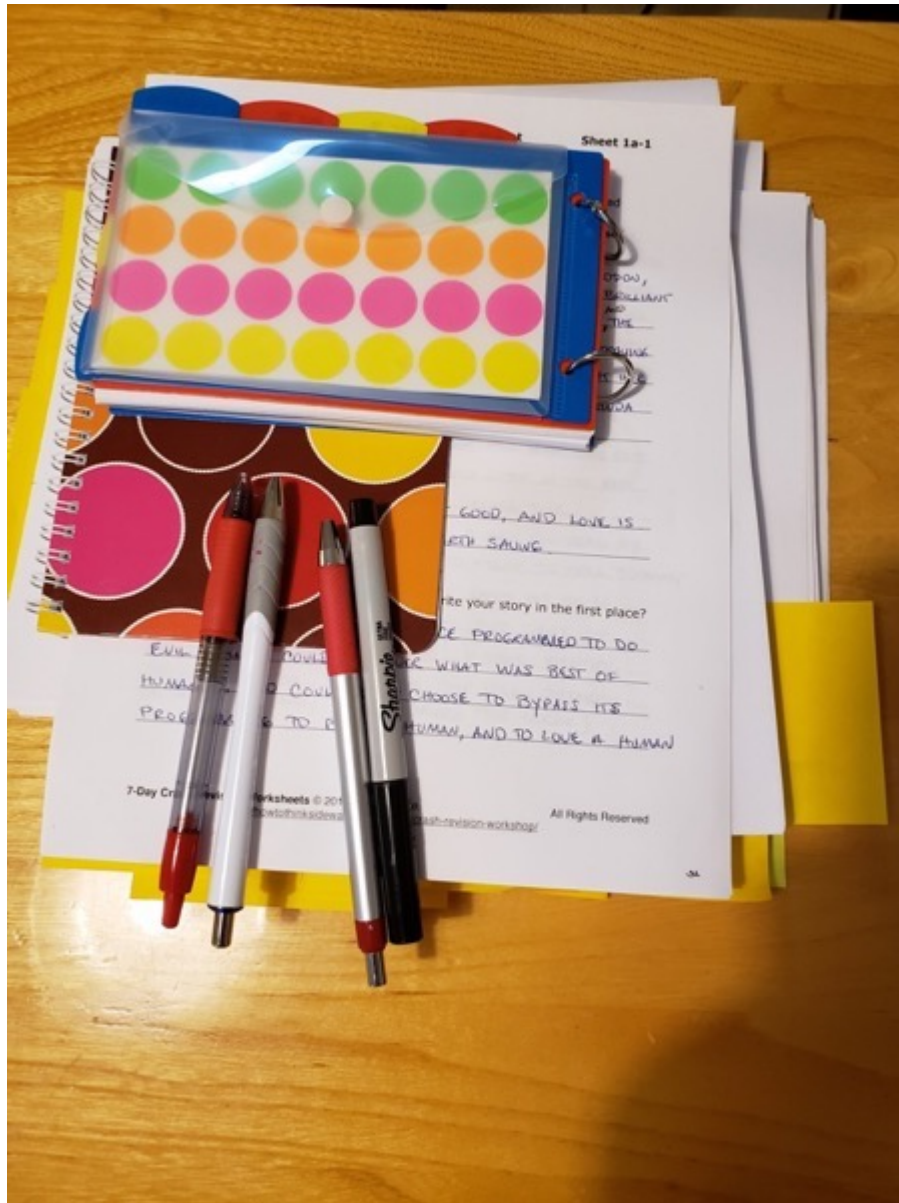
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# **Dead Man's Party – The Write-In Revision is done.**

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.

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\*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.

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#### 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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# **Streamlining During Chaos: Fiction? YES.**

By Holly Lisle

Nothing is yet cast in stone... but in about a week the full force of this particular Chaos Storm is going to hit. The Current Chaos™ is pretty close to becoming the Big Right On Top Of Me Chaos – a state that could last from a best case of one month to a worst case of maybe three.

(See me bravely ignoring the "Wanna bet on that worst case?"



utterance from my Muse, who has ridden this train before.)

**I can't accomplish everything I want to do and still do what I need to do.** So I have put some things on hold for a while in order to accomplish anything.

My brain turns to fiction when things get rough, stressful, difficult. It always has – reading when I was a kid, writing when other people's worlds stopped being what I needed.

I won't complain. Being able to fall into fiction when things are hard is a Big Damn Advantage when you're a novelist. I've decided this time to play to my strengths, and to NOT try to do everything.

So from today until we're out the other side of this, my writing is going to be exclusively fiction.

Objectives:

- **WRITE:** Complete the first novel in The Ohio Series and get it into its month of cool down. (I'm only a couple chapters from the end, so this is a small goal.)
- **REVISE:** Finish the write-in and type-in revisions of Dead Man's Party and get it out to beta readers. (I'm most of the way through the write-in revision, but still have a significant type-in ahead of me, and I do a LOT of on-the-spot revision and adding things during type-in, so thing is a BIG goal.)
- **OUTLINE AND WRITE:** The Emerald Sun first draft. (And this is a big goal, too.)

I'll do a worksheet or two for the podcast as we need them.

I will NOT be starting into the Canary Revision of *How to Revise Your Novel*. until after I'm through the biggest part of the coming mess.

My plan had been to pick that up on Monday and do it as an after-fiction thing. At this point, by best-case scenario

moves that to early September.

Absolute worst case, the first part of next year. (Never start a massive project in December.)

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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.

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and during revision I will not see any problems you find here.

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*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.*

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# **How to Write a Novel, Ko-Fi Redraw Tomorrow, and in the Ohio Series Novel today ... more questions, no answers**

By Holly Lisle

## **Cold-Engine Fiction**

I'll begin with the fiction writing, which this morning started like a frozen engine with a dead battery. I ended up tinkering with a few worldbuilding questions, looking around in the MC's newly discovered home library, and reading back through a couple of past chapters to figure out why the fact that Tori's wandering around in her grandmother's library full of unreadable books – Grandma was apparently capable of reading languages Granddaughter can't even identify – mattered *today*.

When I got the answer to that question, it was still an uphill push, but at least I got to the end of the current chapter, and finished with 1610 words of new fiction I really like.

And a good question to start tomorrow's chapter.

# Discounted How to Write a Novel class



Next, a quick reminder on my How to Write a Novel class, which is available with the Splinters Discount for just 10 more days. (The discount ends on June 30th at 11:59 PM ET).

The complete class is finished except for the BIG bonus, *Interweaving Multiple Story Threads in Big, Complex Novels*, which is bigger than I thought it would, and which I'm still putting together today.

**The class goes off sale at the same date and time that the discount ends – June 30th, 2019, 11:59 PM ET.**

When I make it available again, which I'll do later this year for about a week, it will be in **Finished First-Draft with Splinters**, and the price will be over 20% higher than the current price. I haven't settled on that price yet. I'm currently still finishing the Big Bonus, and am contemplating adding one other thing suggested by current students to the class. Everyone already in class gets all in-version upgrades and additions for free.

Folks who buy later pay a more to cover the cost of my continuing to update and improve the class.

# Finally, redrawing for the final Ko-Fi winner tomorrow

I'm drawing from my list of Ko-Fi supporters tomorrow morning at 10 AM ET for the last signed special-edition print copy of *Create A Character Clinic*.

I'll let the winner know first, then announce the winner here and on my Ko-Fi blog.

If tomorrow's winner decides to decline the prize, it will sit around until some future grab bag drawing, so I can get the other four packaged and mailed out.

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## Post-Vertigo: The Ohio Series, Novel One, and shifts in the story

By Holly Lisle

Had a rough last couple of days due to BPPV, but thanks to the Half-Somersault Maneuver, today I'm okay again.

And I had a great writing day, with a few caveats.

I created a character in the first half of the book that has to go. This character would have (or COULD HAVE) made things too easy for my protagonist, and **easy is never good** in fiction.

I'd countered the "character knows all the secrets" problem by making the character an obstinate jerk – but obstinate jerks are tiresome to read, especially in series fiction.

If I made the character likable, or even sane (since what my MC is doing is desperately important, and being the obstacle in the way of that would be suicidal), my MC would have no obstacle to discovering all the crap that's going on.

I have the right main character. My MC is, as all good MCs are, the person who knows the least in this situation... but I have eliminated (in my thoughts and daily provisional outlining – eliminating what's already written will have to wait for revision) the character who knows everything.

I have substituted this character for two people who each know just pieces of the puzzle. And a library full of books mostly written in languages my MC cannot yet read – a lot of which are not even languages from this world...

Or universe...

It's a nice little library, but my MC is going to have to figure out her own way through a lot of the crap that's now falling on her head.

She doesn't yet realize it, but the most important question she needs to ask now is, "Why did the thing that tried to eat me explode?"

It's a good question. Because, however, she has a whole lot of little fires igniting all around her, the point where she gets around to asking that one is going to be a long time coming.

I'm really happy. Got 2288 words today, and they felt like they were flying. With the know-it-all gone, the story is back on track. And I'm having a wonderful time figuring out what happens next.

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# The Ohio Series: Just a squeak short of the halfway point

By Holly Lisle

Writing flew today.

I got 3044 words even after yanking stuff out and taking second runs at it.

My protagonist has discovered something about herself that she didn't know – at the same time that she wakes up in a stranger's bedroom, sick and confused and with the ragged edges of a memory she cannot quite get to resolve. The last thing she remembers is being outside the library (where she'd been running when her memory blanked out).

Got to use some of the world's magic today, got to deal with some of the folks from other places.

And I had a hard time stopping, but I still have a bunch of things on my bullet journal list. So on to the next.

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# The Ohio Series: The Kitten and the Scary-ass Basement – FRIDAY SNIPPET

By Holly Lisle

This has been a fantastic writing week. In the three days I could work on it, I got well over my 6000 planned words, and am closing on the midpoint of the novel.

But more than that, this has been remarkable fun to write. I've been using processes I came up with to simplify novel-writing for first timers in my How to Write a Novel class... and using them is making this book more fun for me to write than anything I've done in years... while still keeping me heading in the right direction with every scene.

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*The little kid that lives in the back of my mind gave an annoying squeal of happiness. Mystery! it chirped. Something to solve.*

*Only I already had a long line of mysteries, with the meaning of SGAVOD at the top of the list.*

*"Do you know what the letters SGAVOD mean?" I asked.*

*Strasse wrote, They mean it's time for you to go to the Entrance.*

*"The... basement? [SPOILER CUT]"*

*Yes. Take the kitten.*

*"I don't think so," I said. "He's tiny and adorable, and I*

*don't want whatever might be down there to eat him."*

*TAKE.*

*THE.*

*KITTEN.*

*Type the letters.*

*Don't be stupid. The reason you have the kitten is so he can go to the Entrance with you.*

*The words canary in a mineshaft floated through the back of my mind. A kitten might be able to sense dangers that I could not.*

*I did not want to endanger him. But maybe he was a safety measure for both of us, and if I kept him safe, he would keep me safe.*

*I wanted to think so.*

*Wanted to believe that with all my heart.*

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So now I'm moving on to other things I need to get done. And then... weekend. I'm looking forward to doing pretty much nothing for that, though Becca and I do have a fun podcast to do Sunday – **Event Writing, Part 3: Follow-Through**. That will go live on Alone In a Room with Invisible People on Tuesday.

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# **The Ohio Series: 2667 words, and SOFW Goals**

By Holly Lisle

Summer of Fiction Writing stuff first. I didn't realize until

this morning when I went it to check them that I'd forgotten to write down all steps of my clear goals.

So the first thing I did this morning was that. They're on the forum, but I'm reposting them here as well.

## **My Summer of Writing Fiction Clear Goals:**



### **My Summer of Fiction Writing Goals**

- Note: If you want to play, login first or create your free account: <https://hollyswritingclasses.com>
- Then: <http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/SOFW-forum.html>

A smack on the forehead here... I wrote down what I wanted to accomplish this summer in the "discussing what we're going to be doing" thread, but failed to actually write my own goals here (the SOFW forum). Went looking for them last night, because I wanted to check them against what I was doing in my bullet journal, and... eep. Nothing.

**So, somewhat late to my own party, here's what I'm doing:**

My summer FICTION goals are to get clear through the worldbuilding and plotting of *The Emerald Sun: Moon & Sun 3* and to have about 70,000 words done on the first draft of Book 1 of the Ohio Series.

Along with that, I'd like to have *Dead Man's Party* and *The Wishbone Conspiracy* revised and to my editor (Matt). If I can

only finish one revision in that time, it has to be DMP, because that's the one that's becoming the Accelerated Revision Bonus Demo for How to Revise Your Novel as soon as it's finished.

**My clear target is:**

1. Finish the first draft (or first 70,000 words, if I overrun my planned word count) of The Ohio Series: Novel 1 *TOS: N1*
2. Do the complete revision of Dead Man's Party – *DMP* – for both the How to Revise Your Novel class (as the demo for the streamlined “once you've done a few in-depth revisions” process
3. Worldbuilding and plotting for The Emerald Sun (Moon & Sun 3): *M&S 3*

**My reachable deadline is:**

1. *TOS: N1* – August 31
2. *DMP* Revision – June 30
3. *M&S 3* – START DATE: July 1 – COMPLETION DATE August 31

**My working days are: Complicated...**

1. *TOS: N1* – Wed/Thur/Fri
2. *DMP*: Monday
3. *M&S 3*: Monday

**My method of measuring progress:**

1. *TOS: N1* – Word count – 2000 words per day average
2. *DMP*: Read and mark up the entire manuscript fast as possible while still doing a good job – pretend it's a commercial revision deadline with a great slot bump if I hit it, then...Move on to type in, and complete the entire type in over the remaining time, throwing in Marketing Tuesday and weekend if needed.
3. *M&S 3*: As follows ...
  - Both *M&S 1* and two fully read and annotated with

yellow stickies on the important bits

– Toys on Floor identified

– Plot built in line-for-scene fashion in my Scrivener novel template, so that I am ready to start writing the novel while the TOS: N1 cools.

### **My end goal:**

1. TOS: N1 – Complete first draft finished and ready for its pre-revision cooling period
2. DMP: Novel revised and ready to send to bug hunters
3. M&S 3: Complete novel outline in Scrivener, reference books (M&S 1 and 2) marked, tagged, and on desk ready for referral as needed.

### **My daily goal, and number of available days:**

1. TOS: N1 – 39 days, average of 2000 wpd
2. DMP: 7 MAX... 4 if things go well.
3. M&S 3: 9 best case 10-12 if things don't go well and I have to use some Marketing Tuesdays

### **My leverage – WHY I need to do this:**

1. **TOS: N1** – This is my first foray in years into urban fantasy, and I'm going in with a brand-new pseudonym and essentially starting over, with the hopes of building an audience focused just on my urban fantasy. It's a major career experiment in trying to build a comfortable income from my fiction – and getting my fiction to feed my family better than the canned beans lifestyle it's offered with few exceptions since the beginning **would let me put half my work time into writing new fiction.**
2. **DMP:** The *How to Revise Your Novel* class is getting a long-needed revision later this year, and the **Dead Man's Party revision is going to be the brand new Accelerated Revision DEMO Bonus.** Gotta get it done.
3. **M&S 3:** **Because I promised I would finish the series for the kids who read the first two books years ago.** My word

has to mean something – I have to keep that promise.

## **And then Today's Words**

The story flew, and I had a hard time stopping so I could get to the other tasks on my list. I kept wanting to find out what happened next – and what happened next was never what I thought was going to happen.

I finished my provisional outline yesterday, and though things never happen the way they do in the outline, the outline makes sure I include important events, don't forget characters, and don't forget the "ending, or better" that I'm writing toward.

So today, my goal was 2000 words and in my allotted time, I got 2667. It was an AWESOME writing day.

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