

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 through 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.

The Ohio Series – 2842 words, and a series-anchoring question

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Yesterday, I discovered the dark secret in Tori's past. It's grim, harsh, and leaves her with some questions she's been fighting the whole rest of her life to answer.

Today, I discovered the long line of dark secrets in Duncan's past. This over a breakfast he and Tori share.

Everything flew, came together, answered some earlier questions in the book for me, and set up one of the BIG questions that will be asked only implicitly for most of the rest of the series.

It was a damn fine writing day.

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The Ohio Series: My main

character's past gets darker.

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Still hanging with the objective of 2000 words per day. Hit 2084, and with them, something I did not know about my MC. Something dark and grim and gory – because far be it from me to write a main character who's past was full of sunshine and fluffy bunnies.

I'm 64,012 words into this now, with my objective being to hit 70,000, I'm discovering that I might have to run a little long to tie this novel off.

It's planned as the first in a series. I cannot wait to find out what happens next.

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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 – 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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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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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 glass 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 – The first big secret comes out.

[By Holly Lisle](#)

And I'm not going to report it here. But one of my two MCs just confessed to his big secret, and my other one said, in essence. "Isn't that nice? Now help me get this giant monster out of my basement."

2018 words, and a scene that started rough but smoothed out at the end. The rough bits will have to wait for revision.

I love this book, though, and this world.

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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 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: 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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