

DMP Revision Monday, and Not Too Early for the Halloween Listener Episode

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I did **four** hours of work on *Dead Man's Party* yesterday.

I got **one** page of manuscript done.

HOWEVER, I finally got the chance to do the thing I used to do first – world building.

I got six closely written pages of worldbuilding done, in which I figured out (this is AFTER having written the whole first draft of the novel) how my hero works.

Why would I do worldbuilding after writing the whole first novel and being well into revision? Because by working with an incredibly light concept in first draft, I allowed myself to find the story I really wanted to tell – and it took me twelve chapters to find that world. They were chapters in which I got to know the characters, and in a couple of cases didn't. They were chapters in which I found the real conflict, for which I only had a vague concept when I started.

It's a funny way to work for me, but it saved me a helluva lot of time getting started, it allowed me to finish, and it kept me from having a notebook full of stuff I won't use... **because I thought I was building an entirely different world than the one I wrote.**

Here's an example:

In the earlier part of revision, I discovered that the guy I wrote as my hero was a complete non-character, while the guy who wasn't even supposed to be there became not just a great

character, but a guy I really loved.

Here's another example:

I discovered twelve chapters into first draft that I needed to move the story from Year Ten back to Year Two, because if I didn't, one of the characters (the one who I've now removed) would have been dumber than a bag of bricks.

I LOVE what I got yesterday. It doesn't count as words – what I built will have to be used during type-in revision – new stuff that will replace things I'm ripping completely out. But what I discovered gives me the conflict for the first part of the book where I have to completely redo the places where the story is set, and bring in the Post-Apocalypse that I discovered twelve chapters in had happened just two years earlier, not ten.

And now, for something completely different...

WRITERS: The AIARWIP.com Halloween Episode is COMING!!!

Last year in our FIRST Halloween episode, my daughter Rebecca, my son Mark, and I all read (and sort of dramatized) 500-word short fiction written by podcast listeners. We are going to do it again.

Which means you can submit ONE 500-word story you've written to us at the podcast – more details on that when we're actually ready to start accepting.

But it means you have to know how to write 500-word stories. PLOTTED 500-word stories. Not slice-of-life, not mood pieces, not and-then-they-all-died.

Real stories. If you have not even learned how to do this, [How to Write Flash Fiction That Doesn't SUCK](#) is my free

writing class – and to understand what I mean by REAL stories, listen to the stories last year that won.

Our [First AIARWIP Halloween Listener Edition is here](#). We will only accept one story submission per writer, but to get your best story, you generally need to write a batch of them. Which the class is set up to help you do. By the time you finish, you'll have written eleven stories.

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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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Marketing Tuesday: Not so much, because the HTWAN BONUS is still not done...

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Marketing Tuesday got pre-empted by my need to finish the [HTWAN Student-Voted Bonus](#), *Interweaving Multiple Story Threads in Big, Complex Novels*.

Which still isn't done. Today's image is a screenshot of one of the pages showing the technique for building and then using the threads in a complex novel.

At the speed this is going, it's going to take me at least another week, and possibly two to finish this bonus.

So everything else I'd planned today got done, but that was small stuff.

I did not get to start the HTWAN Surprise Bonus, *How to Turn a Stand-Alone Novel Into a Series*. That's still pending.

Why did I decide to throw in this bonus as an unasked for, unpromised extra?

- Because it fits the class.
- Because it's one of the most important skills you'll need to have if you go commercial.
- Because it's even more important if you go indie.
- And because it is ridiculously fun.

This will not teach you how to write the series. That's a BIG class, and it already exists.

But it will teach you how to find the series you DID NOT know was there found inside most novels – and will also show you

how to know when a novel should NOT be made into a series.

OH... Yesterday I got nine chapters of Read-Through Assessment done on my novel *Dead Man's Party*. So yesterday was a pretty good day. Long. But good.

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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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Dead Man's Party: Wrote the SERIES ending...

[By Holly Lisle](#)

DEAD MAN'S PARTY

Last week I wrote a stand-alone ending for Dead Man's Party.

This week, because I had one week and one chapter left, I wrote a series ending, and showed how I built out pieces of story that do not exist in the first draft, but that, if I decide I want *Dead Man's Party* to be the first book in a series – (all perhaps with titles of songs by Oingo Boingo...) – I could do that.

The writing went well, and now the novel, completely finished in first draft whether I want to write it as a stand-alone one-off or as a series, **gets a 30-day (or slightly more) breather** before I head into revising it.

Which means Monday is now an open fiction writing day.

Wednesdays through Fridays are all The Ohio Series, Book One.

Tuesday is going to stay Marketing Tuesday. I need it. A lot.

Monday, though...

THE EMERALD SUN

Starting next Monday, I'm rereading and annotating Moon & Sun – both The Ruby Key and The Silver Door, and out of them pulling the characters, worldbuilding, and conflicts I need to resolve in book three, which WON'T be called The Emerald Sun, but which I'll be calling that for now, until I've finished the first draft.

Once I have that done, I'll start writing M&S III on Mondays. It won't be finished terribly quickly. But this way, it will finally get done.

HOW TO WRITE A NOVEL

The completion of my demo novel ALSO finishes the writing portions of my [How to Write a Novel](#) class.

This week I'll be building Lesson 38, in which I show folks who have finished their first novel how to streamline and adapt the processes in the course into their own personal, flexible, reusable novel-writing system.

And then I'll be building the Class Bonus. Still three days left to go on the vote on that, and there are still some folks who have not voted.

And the voting for the top few possibilities is CLOSE.

I'll be building a lot of the other suggestions as inexpensive paid workshops or little classes. Not all. But there were a lot of really good ideas folks came up with in suggesting what they wanted as their included bonus, and I think a lot of other folks might find them helpful, too.

Not going to say anything that might influence the voting (like hinting what the leaders are at the moment).

HOWEVER... This is everything on the ballot

- How to brainstorm and create bonus stories to promote a novel or series

- My personal Getting Shit Done daily writing system, in detail
- Behind the Scenes: DMP and the No One True Way novel-writing process
- 25 Alternative Idea-Generating Methods for Novels
- How to Resurrect and Complete Your Hard Drive Zombies (So They Stop Eating Your Braaaaaainz)
- How to Turn a Stand-Alone Novel into a Series
- Tutorial: Getting Your Novel Into Print
- The Conflict Resource: The Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of Great Conflict
- Interweaving Multiple Story Threads in Big, Complex Novels
- Alternatives to and Adaptations for the Provisional Outline

And these were the five suggestions that were more broadly applicable that I kept off the ballot. I will probably do them as stand-alones.

- How to Find Your Home Genre
- Writing at Production Pace
- How to Work Around POV Limitations
- How to Foreshadow and Misdirect in Fiction

And this thing I think I'll just do as a freebie for everyone:

- My Favorite Writing Tools, Services, and Stuff

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Dead Man's Party: 1178 words today, some nice tension, and just three chapters left

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I got my words this morning in three ten-minute runs – and I love what I got. I ran a smidge over my goal, but that's okay. This scene was a short, tight run through the third of four scenes that are occurring simultaneously in the novel as my characters go tearing toward the ending.

The world of *Dead Man's Party* is talking to me. I like it, at least the part of it that occurs later, as I understand the story that's been crawling out of my process.

I like it enough that after I do the revision, I'm going to revise and publish it and see how it does for me, and consider writing other books in the same world. I can already think of a number of other books in the world.

But post-apocalyptic cannibal/zombie/AI is a bit outside where I usually play. So we'll see whether the first one gets any interest before I fling myself yet again into "gee, I could write in this world forever."

For writers:

My revision of this novel is going to become the *Streamlined Revision Process* demo for my *How to Revise Your Novel* class, which is getting its long-overdue upgrade/update after I finish the first draft of *How to Write a Novel*.

Which is going to be soon now.

I'm kicking myself for not having used the process I came up with in *How to Write a Novel* to write other novels. I could

have had so much more fiction written, even though most of my time has been going toward class-building.

Regret gets you nowhere, though – so now I can just be grateful that I asked the right questions while I was building the class, and that I'll have finished the first drafts of two novels written simultaneously just a couple weeks apart.

And will have a LOT of fiction to revise in the next couple of months.

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Insider stuff from my How to Write a Novel students

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Monday I asked my existing students the following question:

What is the best thing about my How to Write a Novel class?

I explained that I would be using their words along with their names or forum IDs to tell people not yet in class what mattered most about it to them.

I asked only on the private [How to Write a Novel](#) forum so that these would only be comments from verified, active students... and my folks started answering immediately. Better yet, answers are still coming in as I write this.

Here are some of them. I have not cut or excerpted these –

I'm letting the folks taking the class now talk to you themselves.

I'll post some more of these on Monday.

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HD Peterson says:

The best thing about Holly's How to Write a Novel class is that for the first time ever I actually feel like I have a chance of finishing something... and making that something good.

Most writing books I've read, or other instruction I've received, offer nebulous advice on story structure and vague descriptions of techniques to develop it. Holly gives a clear step-by-step breakdown of how she does it, complete with exercises designed to get you working with both halves of your brain – the creative and the logical – without stifling either one.

Best of all, the story you develop retains spontaneity and the potential for happy accident and surprise without the danger of uncontrolled free-fall into an inescapable abyss. It's evident Holly knows her stuff. Even better, she knows how to teach it.

This is the best money I've ever spent on a writing resource, bar none.

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Diane Berry says:

The best thing about Holly's How to Write a Novel class is that, after many half-finished novels, I'm finally learning how to complete one.

Holly has shown me how to establish a regular writing routine, and, among other things, has given me the tools to create interesting characters, immersive conflicts, surprising plot twists, and story arcs that sustain the middle of the novel –

the place where I've always gotten stuck.

For the first time ever, I've reached the middle of my novel with so many ideas for what happens next, I can't write fast enough to get them down.

How to Write a Novel has been a very, very good use of my time and money.

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Tom Vetter says:

The best thing about Holly's courses – besides the fact that they teach all the specific skills needed to become a professional writer – is that she gives you an entire toolbox of techniques to coax your muse into providing you worthy stories, and to keep that slippery storyteller whispering words all the way to a wonderful conclusion.

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Linda Niehoff says:

To be able to see an author write a book alongside me and demonstrate the lessons I am learning has been priceless.

Seeing Holly's process at work as she hits snags, writes towards new ideas, and fixes problems as they arise in first draft has changed the way I work.

[How to Write a Novel class](#) is giving me a system and structure to get out of my own way and get words on the page.

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Patty Masserman says:

The worksheets in the class are the best part because Holly gets you asking questions that lead to surprisingly useful answers.

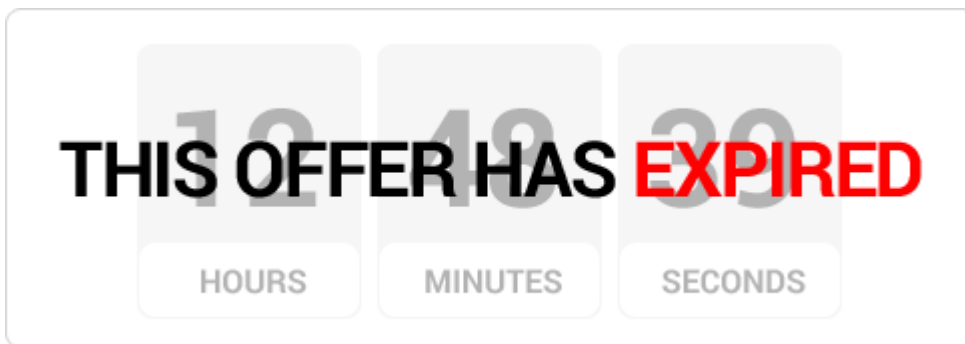
I've tried plotting and pantsing, but she has introduced me to

a way of writing that gives me enough of a scaffolding to build my story that leaves enough room to discover delightful characters and occurrences along the way. So many times, I've stopped and said, "Oh. Okay. Let's see where this goes."

She's an absolutely delightful guide.

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[How To Write A Novel Registration](#) closes in:



[Don't miss the best possible price on this class!](#)

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Angie Mroczka says:

The best thing about this class is that while I know I don't have time to write a book right now, I know that the course is sitting there waiting for me to make the time.

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Yvette Roserie says:

The best thing about this class is that Holly doesn't just give you a list of steps to follow but she breaks down the process and gives real life examples while teaching the method.

Then you get to *watch as she writes her book implementing the methods taught in the class.** The way she teaches it gives you the opportunity to reverse engineer something you think worked in a book you like and apply the method to your own writing.

Also you have the opportunity to go thru this process with other students who are from varying backgrounds.

This class and experience is awesome.

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* **[HOLLY interjecting here] You can literally watch me write.** I'm capturing on video each word of the first draft of the novel I'm creating specifically for this class. The videos are at the bottom of each corresponding weekly lesson. They start with Lesson 5, when we've finish building our ideas, and we start our books.

You'll see every good thing I get. ***And you'll see every mistake. I make some really interesting mistakes in first draft.***

Not everyone finds the videos useful (and watching is not required). But for some folks, they've been a game changer.

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Donna Beasley says:

I had spent about 6 months writing my novel when I realized it was never gonna work. The idea was great but my execution sucked and I needed to start over.

Luckily I discovered Holly's Novel Writing Class that same week. The best thing about this class is its really great for a first time novel writer like me. It really help me think through the concept, character development, descriptions, and her approach to research was freeing.

I am on chapter 21, over halfway through the first draft of my middle-grade adventure novel.

And every time I sit down to write I can't wait to find out what happens next. It's that exciting.

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Chris Bridges says:

This class is the blueprint you have always wanted, but couldn't find on how to write your novel. As long as you do the work you WILL have a novel at the end of the class. The forums and Holly help to make sure everyone understands and can move through the writing process.

Holly also gives you a massive amount of tools to work with.

Holly's classes are the best thing I have bought for moving my writing forward.

If any of these look interesting to you, you can find out everything else about the class here:

[HOW TO WRITE A NOVEL](https://hollylisle.com)

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Free Writing Class: Find Your Fiction Mojo

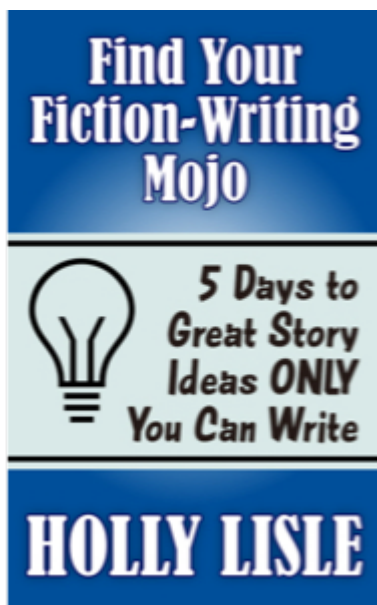
[By Holly Lisle](#)

This is one of those classes I built and then forgot I built.

(Yes, there are more of them, and I'll get them all back up and running over time.)

But today I stubbed my toe on THIS one.

Just click the cover below to go to the sign-up page for the class.



This is a simple email class with some downloadable PDF worksheets – no payment, no classroom, no personal information except the email address you want the class to go to (has to be your address because you'll have to confirm the email – you can't have it emailed to anyone else).

This is a quick start for folks who need to find their way to being excited about writing fiction, and loving what they write. [If it sounds like something you could use, go here.](#)

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