

The Ohio Series – A chaos writing day... and seeking calm through abusive knitting

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I did the best I could.

I had phone calls to make, though, and phone calls to answer, and emails that had to be dealt with promptly, and things I had to put together for people, and at the end of five hours (I was up EARLY this morning), I had 381 new words of fiction, and that wasn't even with deleting any.

I'm throwing in the towel.

It was a good day overall, but fiction-wise, I might as well have been trying to write in the middle of an Iron Maiden concert with Bruce Dickinson at full volume running in circles around me while he sings. (Yeah, I'm a fan.)

That would be a great experience, but probably about as productive for getting fiction written as today.

So I'm going to check on the forums, going to put together notes for the podcast, and then I'm going to close my eyes and breathe and wind down a little.

Or frustrate the crap out of myself with the Sweater from Hell, an ad-hoc design-as-I-go exercise in demonstrating to myself yet again that simple counting – 2-2-8...2-2-8... – is my nemesis.



So my [Summer of Fiction Writing](#) numbers have taken beating this week.

I'm hoping things will settle down next week so I can just fall back into my world and focus.

I'm not counting on it, though.

The Ohio Series – The danger of Old Words – long, rough day, not a lot to show for it

[By Holly Lisle](#)

So I was over two thousand words for the day when I rolled down to Old Words on the page.

Old Words on the page will hurt you. They're things you wrote before you backed up to insert a better idea.

And my better idea was big, and good, and I had a helluva lot of fun writing it the last bit of last week, and yesterday, and today.

But when I finished today's words, I hit the slab of Old Words at the bottom of the page. Read them.

And discovered that I could either have the new, better story, or the old, less good story, but both scenes occurred during the same time with the same characters, and took the story in two different directions.

The old direction was nowhere near as good as the new direction, and the words could not be salvaged for another project.

They simply did not make the cut.

So I cut them.

Which after hours of work during an otherwise brutally stressful day left me with a net gain of 834 words.

On the bright side, I get to write more tomorrow, and there are no more slabs of Old Words lying around to cause me pain.

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The Ohio Novel: The weird little lawyer and the body on the stairs

[By Holly Lisle](#)

In spite of everything – and today there was just a whole lot of “everything” to contend with – I got 1872 words I love.

And found out there were some mysterious circumstances connected with Grandma and her death.

I’m going to leave it at that, except to note that Grandma’s old lawyer tried to make a break for it when Tori started asking questions... and catching him and pinning him down required Tori, Duncan, and some of her better cop skills.

Fun chapter, fun writing day.

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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

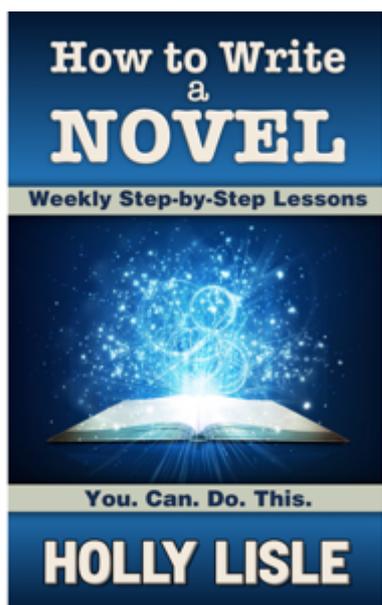
I'll begin with the fiction writing, which this morning started like a frozen engine with a dead battery. I ended up tinkering with a few worldbuilding questions, looking around in the MC's newly discovered home library, and reading back through a couple of past chapters to figure out why the fact that 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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The Ohio Series, Novel 1: Stressful day and 1415 words

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Not much to say. There's a lot of stuff going on, I'm stressed out, and while I got words, I don't like them very much. They'll stay, but I anticipate that when I come back to this next Wednesday, I'll be writing around what I did today.

Some days... some days are just like that, and what are you gonna do?

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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.

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 little kid that lives in the back of my mind gave an annoying squeak 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.

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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