

# Dead Man's Party: How'd you like your brain sanded, writer...?

By Holly Lisle

This morning I rolled into work pretty sure I knew what I was going to do.

And hit my novel of the day, *Dead Man's Party*, with a sort of "Have not had my coffee yet, but I'll get this anyway" focus.

Read my short description of the chapter I'd scheduled to write, and realized several weeks' distance from my provisional outline, and a week away from the actual book, that I'd managed to misidentify the right ending for the novel as Chapter 22 out of thirty-something planned chapters.

Putting your ending into the book before the book ends means that everything else is going to be a let-down – anticlimactic, and kind of lame.

NOT the experience you ever want your reader to have.

THIS meant I had to drag the placeholder for that chapter to its proper space at the end of the novel (thanks, Scrivener, for ease of repair). And then I had to move a previously-planned chapter into the empty space that hole created, and come up with an interesting conflict for that location and that character than I had not yet considered.

Since I'm doing videos all my chapters of *Dead Man's Party*, I captured the whole struggle with chapter 22, including brainstorming the idea I needed to show the character dealing with a problem I had not previously addresses, and also managed to capture the fact that when I stopped writing for the day, I thought I'd missed writing the chapter ending.

When I was doing the print versions for my students and putting the pieces together for the *How to Write a Novel class* for which I'm creating this novel, I realized I would only need one line to finish the chapter.

I'll do that next week, though. Because while I know it's enable with one line, I haven't yet thought up the right line. By the time this has had a week to perk, I'll be able to throw in a nice twist.

Today I wrote 1622 words – only needed 1515.

And in spite of the fact that getting started felt like having my brain sanded – I swear I could smell plastic burning when I was scrambling to fix the problems I'd created by misidentifying my ending and having to come up with a better conflict for my main character – by the time I finished, I liked what I got on the novel this week.

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