

# How to Revise Your Novel: Get the Book You WANT from the Wreck You Wrote

By Holly Lisle

## Foreword

Welcome to Holly Lisle's How To Revise Your Novel! You've already discovered what a challenge (and a thrill) writing a novel is.

Odds are, though, that you've now also discovered that revising a novel is a lot trickier than just running spell-check over it and sending it off to the publisher.

You've found places where your first draft has fallen apart—where your characters have ceased to be interesting, where your plot has holes big enough to kick a herd of buffalo through, where you wandered off your story, or worse.

A LOT of things can go wrong in writing a novel, and a lot of them will—and it doesn't matter whether this is your first novel or your thirtieth. The novel writing process is always complex, and always full of surprises that cause complications.

But no matter how wrecked your first draft is, you can make it better. Better yet, you can make it good. I cannot promise that you can make it salable—connecting with an editor who wants to publish the story you want to tell is never easy, and all writers get far more turn-downs than they get acceptances. Including me.

This is the gig.

To have a chance of selling your work, though, (or simply of making it into the book you imagined it would be when you started writing it), you have to master the art of revision.

And the first thing you need to know about revision is that line editing (the process of going through and fixing sentences and correcting spelling) is the absolute LAST thing you do.

Surprised?

Most writers are.

Over the coming days and weeks, you're going to be doing a lot of editing. You're going to learn to fix your characters, to pull your plot back together, to make sure your conflict matters, to tell the story you're telling, and not the three other stories that snuck in while you weren't looking, and a ton of other things.

With every lesson, you'll learn new strategies for finding the mistakes you've made and for fixing them, and for finding the things you've done well, and polishing them.

But first, you have to learn three critical steps in starting your revision.

- You have to learn what you wanted the book to be when you started writing it.
- You have to learn what the book became when you wrote it.
- And you have to learn what you want your book to be when you're done.

So that's where we'll start. Onward!

## **Introduction**

Brace yourself. You're going to read your book this week. And odds are pretty good that you'll be reading most of it again

next week, and a whole lot of it the week after that, and again the week after that, and...

In Real Life (and here we cheerfully define Real Life as: "Every revision you do on every book you write AFTER you finish this course"), you will read your novel a few times. You will revise it ONCE for yourself, and once or twice for the editor who buys it. (That's the very last lesson in this course. How to take everything you'll learn here, and work it into a process that will allow you to get everything done in one revision.)

But this is not Real Life. Not yet.

In Real Life, you already know what to look for, how to find it, and how to fix it when you find it. This is Training For Real Life, where you learn what to look for, how to find it, and how to fix it, and in order to make each step clear and clean and simple to understand, we have to go through them one at a time, have you find them in your manuscript, and have you plan out your fixes, and work through a few fixes on worksheets so that you're sure you know what to do. Step by step.

So just this once, you're going to be doing heavy backtracking in your book. You're going to be working from the biggest problems to the smallest ones, because when you figure out where the big problems are, you know that you can fix those bigger issues.

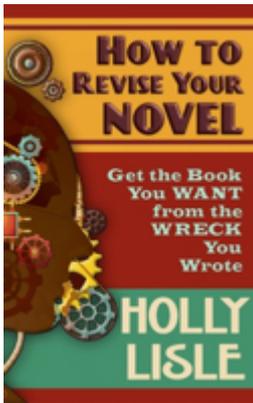
If you didn't realize the process you're going to be following over the next several months is not the way you'll do it once you know all the techniques, you could get pretty frustrated. Pretty tired. Really sick of your book.

Okay. Honestly? You're probably going to get sick of your book this time anyway. When I was learning to revise novels, I got thoroughly sick of mine. But I got better at it every time I revised a novel, until I was only doing one revision per book,

and getting everything that needed to be done in that one revision.

You'll get there. One-Pass Revision is wholly attainable in Real Life for writers who actually intend to write books for a living—or even regularly. It's the way you hit deadlines and hand in books that are better than what you or your editor hoped for.

You WILL get there.



**Where to buy...**

## **How To Revise Your Novel**

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