

Revision, the Friday Snippet, and the next Clinic

By Holly Lisle

I started ripping **The Ruby Key** apart in my head about an hour after I finished the first draft. I was going to start in on it on Friday, but Friday rolled around and I realized I wasn't quite ready. So I made myself not look at the book until today (actually, I'm printing it out to work on right now, so I still haven't looked at it).

But that didn't stop me from thinking about it. I love the general story and there are parts of what I've written that will undoubtedly go almost unchanged from first draft to print. But the first draft has problems. Almost all first draft manuscripts do.

I'm not happy with the **depth of any of the characters except for Genna**, the protagonist. Both Yarri and Danrith need to be much more involved.

There are a couple of **scenes that, from memory, feel to me like just running around**. As I read through them over the next few days, I might find that I've put more into them than that, but at the moment I don't think I have.

The first chapter isn't where I need to start the book. I like the chapter and it still feels solid to me, but **the story actually begins back at the house**, just after twilight, with a scratching at the shuttered and barred window of Genna and Dan's house.

I don't think I've used **the blind hounds and the warrior-haunted harp** to best advantage. They can be scarier than they are, and they need to be. I like what I did with the bard, but I don't care much for the wobbly line the silver woman takes.

The audiomaerist, now that I know her deal, needs to have some of that foreshadowed. Or maybe reverted back to what I'd planned for her in the beginning. And I have no clue yet why she and the cat were connected, and I'm not sure if that's a tangled web that needs to be worked out in this story, or held over as an important thread in the next one.

In any case—Friday rolled around and I tried to figure out what to post for the **Friday Snippet**, and discovered that between things I knew I was going to change, and things that I think are going to stay the same but that have massive spoilers in them, I didn't have anything I could comfortably post. And I realized that it's going to take me a good part of March to tear **The Ruby Key** apart line by line and put it back together again the way I can see now that it needs to be. So for me the **Friday Snippet** is going to have to be sidelined until I start on the next fiction.

Zette, however, had a cool idea about the **Friday Snippet** being a *thing*, in which published and unpublished writers would post a short cut from their current work in progress. She'd maintain the list, and folks could go to her site and go through it, checking to see who'd put up something new. I love the idea, and want to be in on it.

Finally, comments on the **Create A World Clinic**, and the clinic that's actually going to be next. **Create A World**, as I've envisioned it, will require quite a few illustrations, and in PDF form, illustrations increase the file size immensely. My objective has been to keep every book under 2 MG so that everything will be accessible to folks on low-bandwidth connections, and so far, I've kept very close to that. The books don't clog buyers' e-mail boxes, they don't take a lifetime to download on dial-up.

So I have to refigure how to present that particular clinic, or how to get it to low-bandwidth readers. In the meantime, I want to do another clinic. And the **Create A Plot Clinic** looks

like the way to go. The other books look like they have good support, but **Plot** came in with a compelling lead, and a few voices of desperation.

So that will be my next project if I don't hear back from Anna Genoese with her **Hawkspar** revision requests before then.

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