

# Stakes and Ale

By Holly Lisle

Matt figured out what was wrong with the proposal. He pointed out that, as written, the heroine is not in immediate danger, and when she is, the danger isn't enough. Just her life, not her life plus other things that are more important to her.

Stakes. Every book has to have them, and through various incarnations of this proposal, the stakes I'd built into previous versions washed out. So this morning, I'm figuring out what else is at risk for Emma. What she has to lose that means more to her than her own life. She's change so much from version one of proposal seven that I realized I don't know her too well anymore. I'll start with a ten-minute free write in her voice (first person), then pick up what she tells me and figure out how to expand what I get into tension from page one.

Matt also pointed out that I need more sound effects. That sounds are visceral and immediate, and real – something our bodies acknowledge as being true. Whereas we can take or leave visuals. So I'll be working sounds into the proposal to up the creep factor.

That's the plan, anyway.

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