

Working Backward, in Neon

By Holly Lisle

I'm not done with the line-for-scene. I'm not even **close** to being done with the line-for-scene. I'm working from the back of the book to the front, with four different colors of index cards. (I had a bunch of neon cards lying around, and this is the perfect project for which to use them.) Green cards indicate the existing scene only needs mild editing for flow, not for content. Yellow means that the existing scene has at least one new plot element that needs to be worked in, but that overall it's pretty sound. Orange means the existing scene has some salvageable material, but that major plot changes need to be incorporated to make it relevant. Hot pink means the existing scene has to go, completely, and a new one will have to be written to replace it.

I'm working backward because I'm trying to drag the strong elements of the story with me to the front, and by going in this direction, it will be easier to see what cannot be saved. It would be too easy, working from front to back, to think that something could be modified to fit, because the vast changes in the second half would not be as evident.

Near the end, I have to kill someone I've loved throughout the book. This was my first big orange card, and realizing it, I about cried. Other than that, this is going well. It's simply such a big book that it's going slowly. I'm realizing that most of my scenes so far have averaged ten pages, (with some critical ones in the four to five page range, and only a couple that are fifteen or more, and that the book in printed form is nine hundred pages), and that I'm rebuilding the book as much as I am noting what's already there, and figuring out where it needs to be in the pile.

I didn't give myself enough time to do this, and I didn't give

myself enough time for the type-in. The orange cards already attest to that, and I haven't even hit the red-card area to the front. I'm going to be double-shifting between **Bad Moon Rising** first draft and **Hawkspar** type-in for a while.

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