

Revision: An Overview

with

KayLynn Flanders

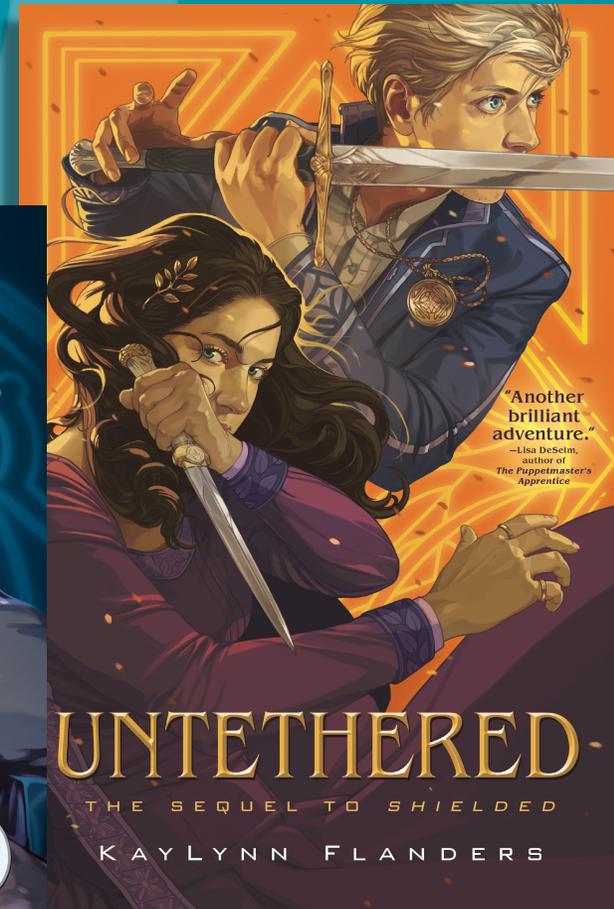
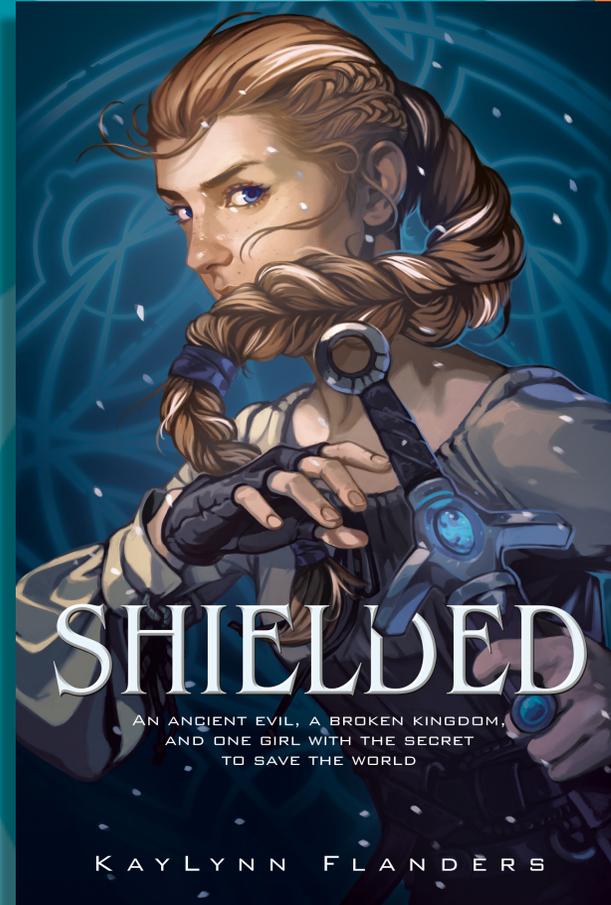
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Notes



What Is Revision?

- Writing translates a story from your mind to the page.
- Revision takes the story *to your reader*.
 - Make intentional choices with *how* we tell a story =
 - Immerse a reader in a new world that they don't want to leave

“Revision is about making your reader feel the same way about your story as you do.” ~Maggie Steifvater

Why I Love Revising

- I love seeing a story get better.
- The best ideas usually come as we're honing and improving lesser ideas.
- It's a mindset, a learnable skill.

The Process

- Pre-draft; draft; rest; revise; rest; revise, etc.
- Pre-Draft: separate ideas into Character, Setting, Plot, Series
- Drafting: *Do not edit**
 - Keep a document open with ideas for changes
 - Leave comments to yourself as you go
 - Use a special symbol for quick searching to come back to [<<]
 - Keep a style guide with usage issues (spelling, capitalization, language, weaknesses, crutch words, etc.)

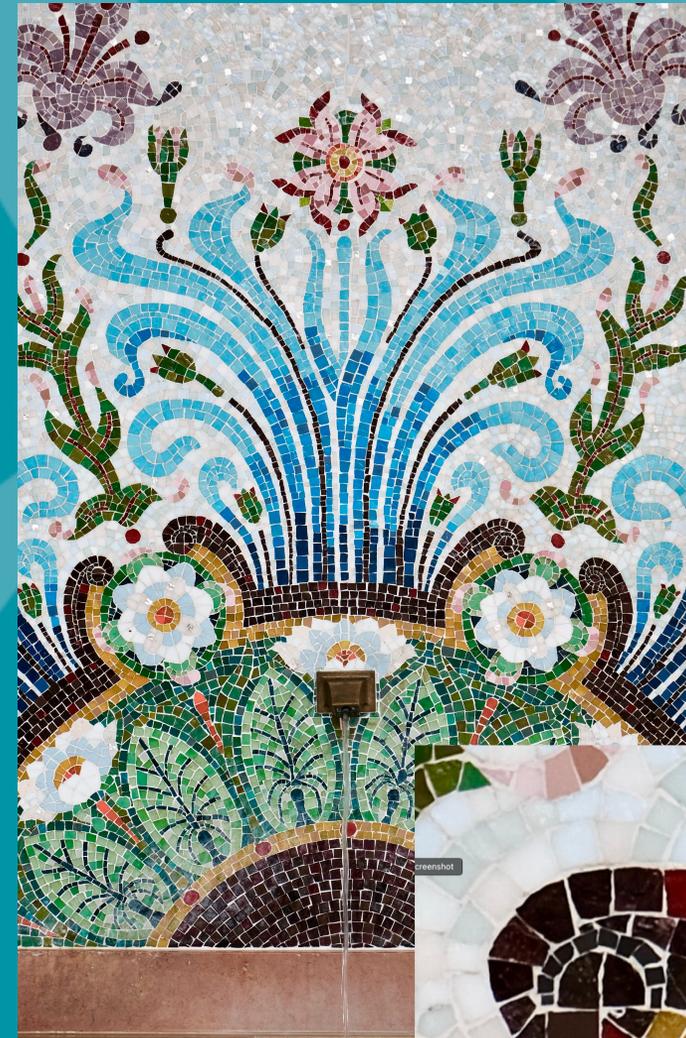
*unless that works for you

Maggie Stiefvater: Revision

- Mindset: you are more than one draft.
- Objectivity: there will come a time you need outside eyes to check your instincts.
- Priorities: you can't revise forever.

Types of Editing

- Developmental edit: overall story—character, setting, plot
- Line edit: page, paragraph, sentence, word
- Copy edit: consistency, correctness
- Pass pages / proof read: the final look



FRESH EYES

- REST:
 - Long enough that you feel excited about tackling a revision
 - Long enough that you have a fresh mind, fresh eyes, and a fresh heart
- NEW POV:
 - Trick you brain by printing off your manuscript or changing the font, margins, and indents
 - (A5 or 6x9" sized page, 1" margins, indent at .25")

LOVE LETTER

- Write a love letter on the first page of your manuscript
 - What do you love about it?
 - What are your hopes and dreams for it?
 - Why did you write it? Why is *this story* important to you?

SCENE MAP

- Columns for chapter number, scene, scene job, and notes
- Additional column ideas:
 - Word count/chapter page count, plot structure, characters arc notes, POV, timeline, etc.

YOU CAN'T FIX IT UNTIL YOU SEE IT.

	A	B	C	F
1	Chapter	Scene	Scene Job (why it's there)	Notes
2				
3				

Early revision

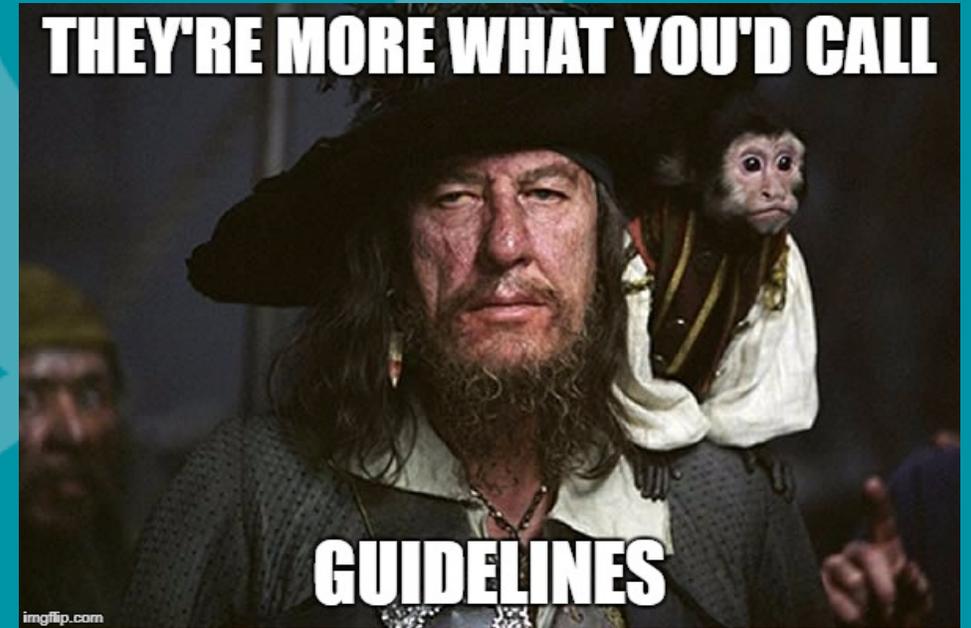
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	STC Beats	Emotional Arcs	Act	Percentage	Plot/Pinch Beat	STC Beat	Word Count	New Chapt	Old Chapt	Scene	job	BELIEF NOTES	notes	GENERAL NOTES

Later revision

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	STC Beat	TIMELINE	Word Count	Chapter	Scene	job/reveal	notes
2		Day 1	2152	1	Funeral procession	Her father didn't	SEE feedback from

FILLING IT OUT

- Scene: when something is happening
 - Change with new character/setting introduced
- Write scene list on sticky note
 - Note timeline at the top left of the page, page count at top right.
- Enter list of scenes into scene map, along with job it does for the story.
 - Is it pulling its weight? Redundant? Wrong order? BORING?
- Fill out NOTES column as you go.



Now: REVISE!

- Chapter by chapter: big changes from sticky notes, along with small, line and copy edit level changes
- How do I do line and copy edit level changes?



Line Edit Tips

- Page, paragraph, sentence, word
- The more words it takes to convey your message, the less power each of those words carries.
- What lens are you telling the story through?

Line Edit

- Tools:
 - Merriam-Webster
 - OneLook.com
 - Etymonline.com
 - CMOS (mostly chapters: 5–8) and the online version,

Grammar vs. Style

- Don't *accidentally* break rules
- Take into account category/genre



Falling with Style

Grammar can be subservient to Style, but
Style should be subservient to Clarity.

Grammar < Style < Clarity

Line Edit: Page Level

- How does the physical page look?
- Is there white space, or is it all heavy blocks of text?
- Does the page flow organically, with room to breathe?
- Is there a variety of paragraph types on the page and throughout the chapter?

Paragraph Types:

Physical setting
personal description,
Dialogue
physical action
internal action/thought,
backstory/remembered action
miscellaneous exposition
punctuation

Line Edit: Sentence Level

- “As” statements: As she something something, she something something.
 - The edges of Relle’s smile turned brittle as she greeted her cousins...
- Constructing a sentence like this pulls the reader out of the story because the reaction precedes the action. This makes the reader have to go back and think about the reaction to the action in the second part.

Line Edit: Sentence Level

- Gerund beginnings: Starting a sentence with the present participle of a verb used as a noun instead.
 - Jumping into the conversation, Sam told them how he'd saved the world.
- Dangling modifiers (or dangling participles): “A participle that has no syntactic relationship with the nearest subject is called a dangling participle.” (CMOS 5.115)
 - Frequently used in early America, experts suggest that shaming is an effective punishment.
 - Being a thoughtful mother, I believe Meg gives her children good advice.

Sentence Level: Read Aloud

- Repetitive Sentence Structures

- Repeated initial word
- Same sentence length in a row
- Similar structures
 - Ex: I touched my hair, making sure the elaborate plait was in place.

- Pacing

- Varied sentence length
- Keep description to a minimum *in* the action (save for before or after)
- Choose words that reflect the pacing (short vs long, consonants vs sonorant)

Line Edit: Sentence Level

- Active vs. Passive
 - Active: Bill caught the ball.
 - Passive: The ball was caught by Bill.
- Clichés
 - Your reader will *skip over them*.
 - Twist them to show character or setting
- Dialogue Tags
 - *Said, asked* are invisible (which is a good thing)
 - If you have to name the emotion, your reader isn't feeling it
 - Use action beats as tags

2020 is a unique
Leap Year.

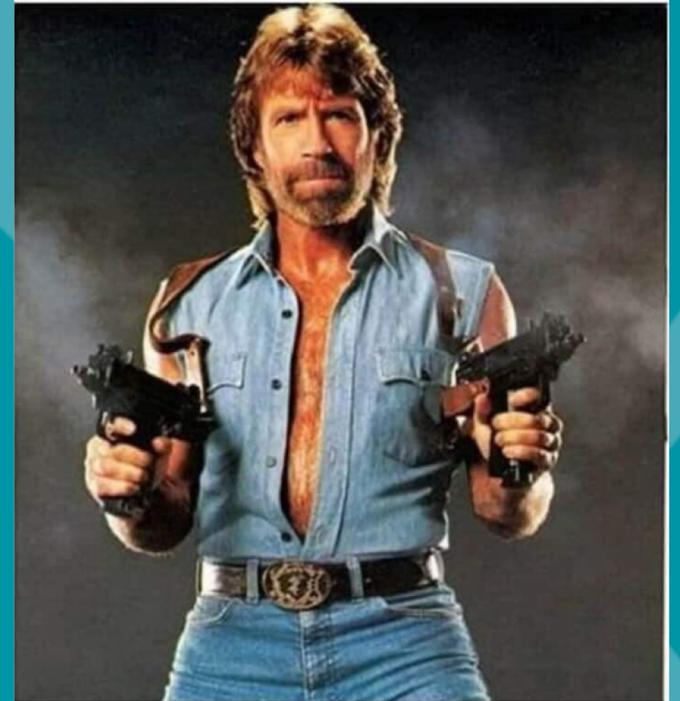
It has 29 days in
February,
300 days in March,
and 5 years in April.

Line Edit: Sentence Level

- Showing vs. Telling
 - Where do you want the focus? Where do you want the reader to dig into the scene?
 - Where can you move a little faster to draw your reader to that moment of impact?
 - How can you show your character more in the scene? And where will that showing have the biggest impact?
- Filter Words
 - Distance the reader from the action
 - to see, feel, think, wonder, realize, hear, touch, watch, look, seem, decide, notice, know, and can
 - Can be used well when establishing POV

Chuck Norris has been exposed to the Coronavirus.....

.....The virus is now in isolation for 2 weeks.



Line Edit: Sentence Level

- “To be” verb: am/are/was/were
 - Weak verb: only states that something exists with no connotation
 - Use stronger verb instead (onelook.com)
 - Can use in dialogue, to land joke, increase pace, etc.
- Adverbs
 - Too many can signal lazy writing
 - Be intentional
- Crutch Words
 - Just, seem, nearly, appear, somehow, a bit, etc.
- Miscellaneous
 - Be wary of extremes and hedging (always, all, every, never, almost, seems)
 - Say what *is*, not what *isn't*; Use italics, not all caps

BONUS POINTS

- Check in to MOOD
 - How should your readers feel at this point in the story?
 - Do your words, and the choices you've made in how you tell the story, reflect that mood?



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Want the slides and handout?