

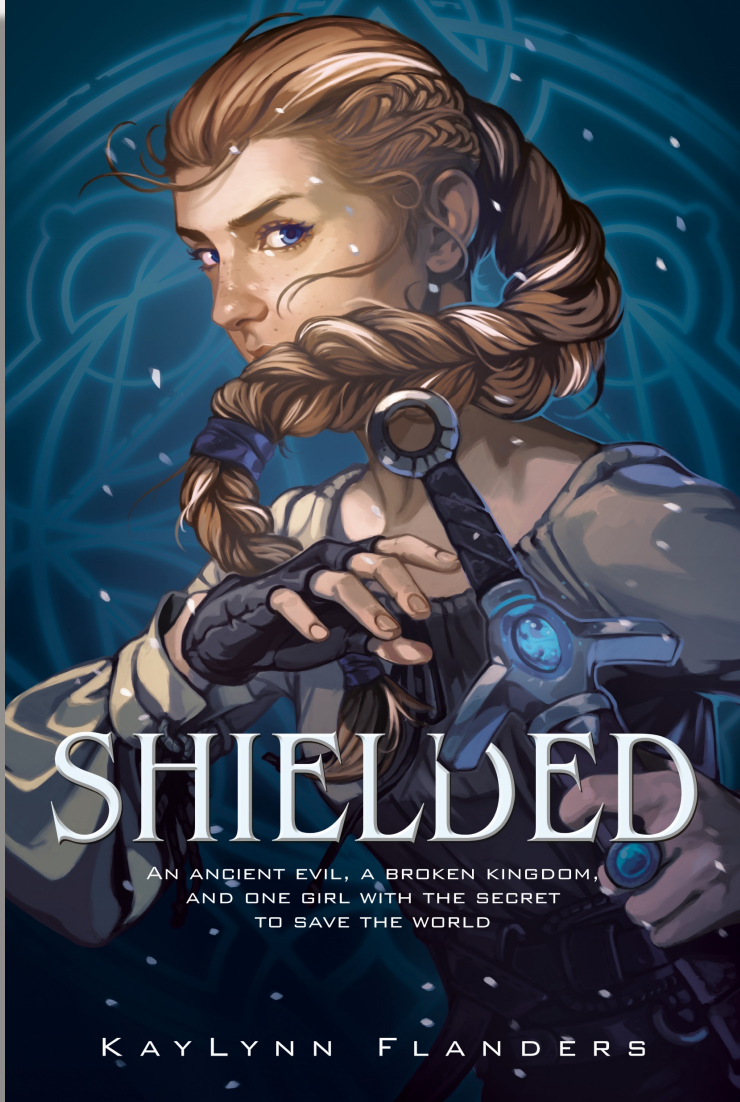
Revision Hacks For Fresh Eyes

with

KAYLYNN
FLANDERS



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What Is Revision?

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

- 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 Mindset

- Revision means you aren't stuck with a first draft! Yay!
- The best ideas usually come as you're honing and improving lesser ideas.
- Revising is a learnable skill.

The Process: Overview

- Pre-draft; draft; rest; revise; rest; revise, etc.
- Pre-Draft: separate ideas into Character, Setting, Plot, Series
- Drafting: *Do not edit as you draft**
 - 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 (sometimes I do)

Three Truths of 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.

(paraphrased from Maggie Stiefvater's course)

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



Step 1: 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
 - Write down any ideas that come to you during the rest period

Step 1: Fresh Eyes (cont.)

- NEW POINT OF VIEW:
 - Trick your brain by
 - printing off your manuscript (double spaced, single sided)
 - changing the font, margins, and indents (A5 or 6x9" sized page, 1" margins, indent at .25")
 - Print vs Digital: ([article linked here](#))
 - You miss details when reading on screen vs paper
 - Digital reading impairs comprehension for complex texts
 - More of your brain is activated while reading print
 - Digital screens cause visual and mental fatigue faster than print

Step 2: 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?
- What is the MOOD of your story?
 - Mood=how you want your reader to feel

Step 3: Scene Map

- Columns for chapter number, scene, scene job, and notes
- Additional column ideas:
 - Word count/chapter page count, plot structure, character arc notes, POV, timeline, first/last lines, 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	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
STC Beats	Emotional Arcs	Act	Percentage	Word Count	New Chapter	Old Chapter	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

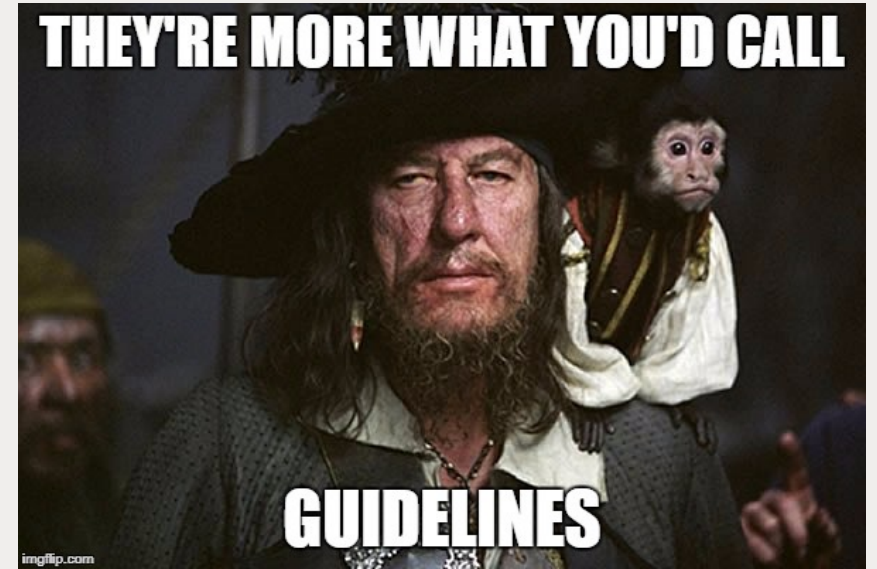
Step 4: Fill it Out

Note: Do one chapter at a time (I add paperclips to chapters for funsies)

A. Within first chapter, mark scenes with line in margin (or highlight text)

- Scene = something is happening, and the scene changes when a new character or setting is introduced

B. Write a brief scene list on sticky note and stick it to the first page of the chapter



Funeral Procession

Addresses crowd

Crowd = sand on coffin

Founders invite

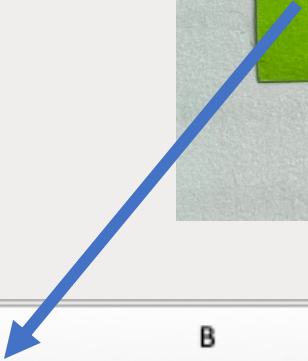
Mother gives red stone

Relle alone

Song for water

Bird @ lake

ONE




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

Step 4: Fill it Out (cont.)

C. When finished with the chapter, transfer scene list from sticky note into excel, and fill in “Scene Job” column

- Why is this scene necessary? Why is it necessary *here*?
- Scenes can: introduce characters, add subplot, increase tension, show world or character, transition of space/time/goals, etc.
- Scenes *should*: do more than one thing.
- Is the scene pulling its weight? Redundant? Wrong order? BORING?



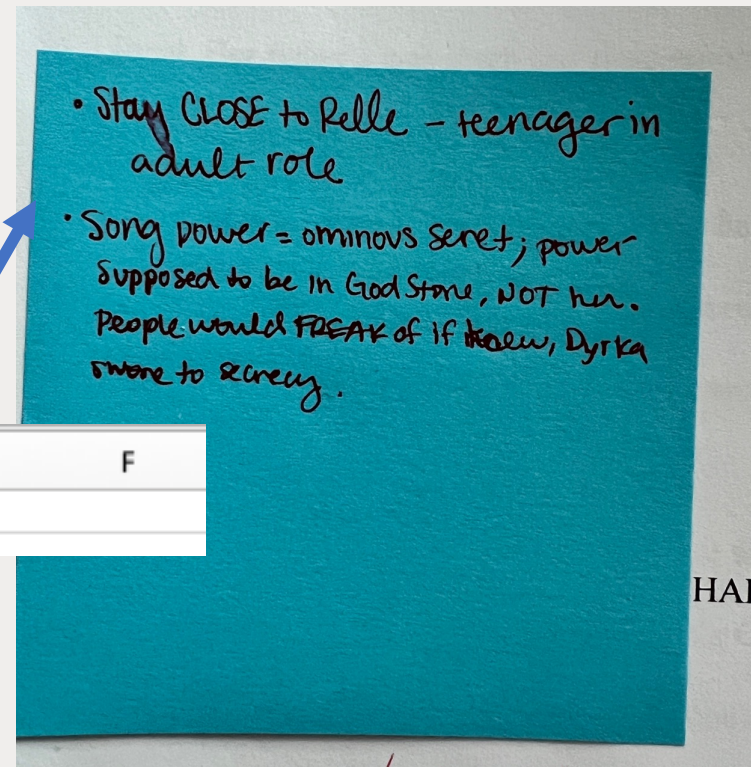
	A	B	C	F
1	Chapter	Scene	Scene Job (why it's there)	Notes
2				
3				

Step 4: Fill it Out (cont.)

D. Add any revision ideas for the scene in the “Notes” column as you go

- Add any notes from rest period
- Hints to be dropped earlier, reveals moved
- Character arc adjustment
- Tension, timeline, etc.

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



E. After going through whole book, write ideas from “Notes” column on a sticky note, and put the sticky note on the first page of the chapter.

C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
Act	Percenta	Plot/Pinch Beat	STC Beat	Word Count	New Chapt	Old Chapt	Scene	job	BELIEF NOTES	notes	GENERAL NOTES
1	1.00%	HOOK	R 1: Opening	3146	1	1	Intro	vibe	Relle: obedient,	Holy crap fix Relle's scenes. Like. All of them. Get the purpose straight.	CATALYST is 2k words late
	1-12%	Set-up				1	garden	fam history, position, singing		GET THE STC IN ORDER AND TIGHT PLEASE	
		(Main Idea expressed)				1	aunt calls inside			MAYBE have her telling the story of hearing the voice of the gods? Or hint that when she was chosen as next Caller at age 9, she heard whisperngs, and she's been trying to be obedient enough to hear those whispers ever since.	
						1	convo with aunt, father changed			What do I want to show in Relle's chapters? Her wound, misbelief, village cuture of perfectionism/punishment; history/vastness of world; gods/stories/lore; lore of desert/spirits too	
			R 2: ANTI-Theme			1	prepping for father	sash, ambition, expectations			
			R 3: Setup			1	Father cnvo:	4 gods, rules, protect one over good of all		BRING UP VOICE SOMEWHERE HERE? That father was chosen, heard the voice of a god from the desert, and that if she's good enough, she will hear it too. And weave this a little more ino Relle?	
						1		Relle will offer call, not enough water, lies			
						1		Pressure to abandon village, memory will outlast death			
						1	Relle processing: bird eaten	setting, motivation			
											1: scenes, purposes

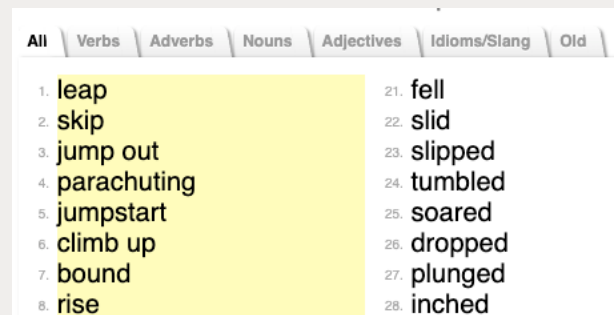
Step 5: Revise!

- Revise chapter by chapter
 - Note the big changes from sticky notes and scene map
 - ***along with*** line edits
 - to create an *intentional experience* for your reader!(!!!)



Line Edit

- Looks at the page, paragraph, sentence, and word
- Tools:
 - Merriam-Webster
 - OneLook.com
 - Etymonline.com
 - CMOS (mostly chapters: 5–8) and the online version



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/Word Level

- Looks at grammar
 - Grammar can be subservient to Style, but Style should be subservient to Clarity.
 - Be aware of your own weaknesses and patterns
 - Read aloud to spot sentences with the same number of words in a row, or overused structures.
 - Watch for crutch words, or repeated words.
- Looks at *lens*
 - Would the character say it like this?
 - Would the character use this metaphor/simile/comparison?
 - What do their words say about the character speaking them?

Line Edit: Sentence Level

- *Tip: Read everything out loud.*
- Watch for repetitive sentence structures.
 - Repeated initial word (sentences starting with *She*, for example)
 - Same sentence length in a row
 - Similar structures
 - Ex: I touched my hair, making sure the elaborate plait was in place.
- Use your sentences to create intentional pacing
 - Varied sentence length
 - Keep description to a minimum *in* high emotion action (save for before or after)
 - Choose words that reflect the pacing (short vs long words, choppy consonants vs smooth sonorant syllables)

Line Edit: Sentence Level

Be aware of:

- 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 always okay
 - If you have to name the emotion, your reader isn't feeling it (ex: said angrily)
 - Use action beats as tags (Ben stood. "I'm done here.")

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

- Intentional showing and 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 the focus of the scene?
 - How can you *show* your character more in the scene? And where will that showing have the biggest impact?

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

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



Line Edit: Word Level

- Be wary of filter words
 - They distance the reader from the action
 - Examples: to see, feel, think, wonder, realize, hear, touch, watch, look, seem, decide, notice, know, and can
 - Can be used well when establishing POV

Example:

Chris **noticed** the general in the corner of the room.

(Chris is the one noticing the general)

verses

The general **huddled** in the corner of the room.

(immediacy: the reader experiences the action
with the character)

Line Edit: Word Level

- “To be” verb: am/are/was/were
 - Weak verb: only states that something exists with no connotation
 - If you can, use a stronger verb instead (onelook.com)
 - Definitely use in dialogue, to land joke, increase pace, etc.
- Adverbs: verb ending in -ly
 - Too many adverbs 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)

Line Edit: Sentence/Word Level

- Looks at MOOD
 - How do the words/sentences I've chosen make the reader feel?
 - How should your reader feel at this point in the story?

The more words it takes to convey your message, the less power each of those words carries.

- Be intentional with *how* you tell the story.

Mood + Breaking Rules

That night, Gabe breaks the only rule we have.

I feel unsettled while I wait for Gabe to emerge from his room. The kitchen has turned into the small, yellow place that it becomes at night when the darkness outside presses it smaller. I hurriedly wash off three plates that match and cut a fat piece of apple cake for each of us, the biggest one for Gabe. Setting them out on the table, three lonely plates where once there would've been five, depresses me, so I busy myself making some mint tea to go with them. As I arrange and rearrange the teacups by our plates, it occurs to me, too late, that mint tea and apple cake might not go together.

- THE SCORPIO RACES, Maggie Stiefvater (Chapter 3)

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

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



Copy Edit Tips

- Errors: spelling (lightning vs lightening, past vs passed), punctuation, grammar, but also usage issues (like accept/except, aloud/allowed; awhile/a while; irregardless, etc.)
- Consistent character descriptions
- Logical cause/effect (keep a seated character seated, etc.)
- Timeline issues: you only get one Tuesday per week
- Spatial issues—where characters are in relation to setting or other characters
- Voice check: would that character really say it like that?
- Accuracy: are statements portrayed as facts actually true facts?
 - how stuff works, special terminology—spelling and capitalization and usage, dialect accuracy, etc.

Need New Scene:

Day 29: Yesilia abt healing

1 Day

Sparring + sneak to library

Day 30: 1 Day

Protecting Pr

Done healing, c

Jenna learns patterns w/ Chi.
(L, S)

Spar w/ Enzo (Some farm hist.)
(H, F)

Library + Pomo Intro (H, L, S)

Scene List (I tracked
tension—low or high
tension, and pacing:
slow or fast)

I tracked timeline,
and what story
questions this
scene answers

Circle sticky was for big
changes I wanted to make
to scenes within chapter

Underlined text is details I want to keep
when I move this scene

Green line here is
me cutting THE
ENTIRE SCENE.

Keeping track of items over scenes
and chapters so I don't lose them

I've parried enough for today." It was almost dawn and the barn would be overrun soon with soldiers. I handed him my sword, hilt first.

He turned and took it, then stepped into my path, stopping me up short. I caught a glimpse of his face and something purely him. "Are all Hálendians like you?"

I stepped away from him—he was too disconcerting standing so close. I think maybe they used to be, but..." I trailed off and shrugged.

His brow furrowed. "How did you become like this? So focused with a sword?"

I debated for a moment, but found I wanted to tell him. We might have been married by now if it weren't for the mage. I wanted him to know a little of who I was, and even why.

"My mother died when I was young." I started stretching out my arms, an excuse to do something with my hands. "My father wasn't a very loving man, and I was left mostly on my own."

He pathy, but I didn't want his pity. "I did have an older brother, but he died. He taught me everything he was learning so we could spar together. We would sneak to our own hidden spot and practice, and when his teacher learned of it, he invited me to learn from him as well." I smiled at the memory and watched the golden dust floating through the musty barn.

He could already beat half of his guard, so we—my brother and I—continued.

I tensed at the mistake and thought furiously for some way out. "My father was in charge of some of the troops in Hálendi." I shrugged and tried to think of something to divert Enzo from this topic, knowing he was adding that piece to my puzzle, but he saved me the trouble.

being here?"

Q: Who attacked / why
Her magic / Turia

Handwritten notes on a green circular sticky:
• Jenna sneaks in
• Enzo to find her (maybe)
• Jenna wants what
• Enzo has other
• Enzo's out with Enzo one liked Jenna
• Enzo's out with Enzo one liked Jenna
• Enzo's out with Enzo one liked Jenna

Yesilia's closet for healing

Karla suspicious of something?

I placed my book from Keeper on the desk, running a hand over the worn cover and

her uniform + ~~her~~ Enzo's clothes + Ren's book into Jenna's bag

Save for when she's
really angry
more w/ Yesilia

I underlined my *to be* verbs, other weak or repetitive words I wanted to change

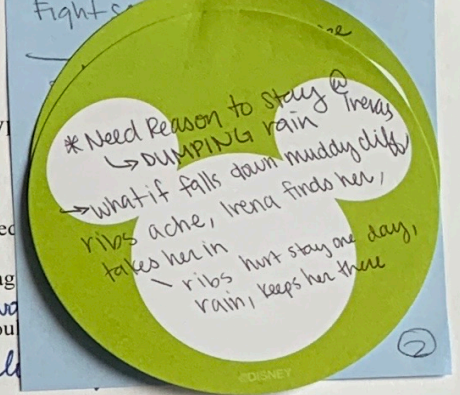
Changed order of sentences and paragraphs

Plenty of space to make more notes for chapter

*Add in Ring details in Wild Chap?
Thoughts feel different become part of hand - accustomed in hafa's training part his teaching how to defend against magic, but how do you fight with it? Once you have it? I dk. write it.

Day 18/19
1 day

Q: Jennis magic - feel diff. out of world
Added character motivation



make sure this happens in Wild so I like away from chadras?

My senses were on fire, cataloging every snapped
crossed straight through a small clearing and left my bag
into the undergrowth, I snuck around to the side so I could
The forest sounds dwindled away. *Not unnatural*

His foot didn't make a sound as he stepped into the clearing. Very little sunlight filtered through the overhead branches, and the man blended into the shadows as if he were one of them. He wasn't smudged, like the mage had been, but there was something overly precise in the way he moved. He held a black sword and wore a gray cloak that billowed in the still forest air.

I inhaled slowly and let my focus narrow down to my sword and my opponent. *slipped out of embrace of cover silently, attacking when*
I didn't make a sound as I attacked, just jumped out at him when he drew even with me.

He wasn't surprised; he simply turned and met my blade, raising his other hand as well. Instinct took over from my week of practicing with Master Hafa, and I lifted my ring hand. I staggered back from the shock of absorbing the burst of energy the man sent at me. Magic.

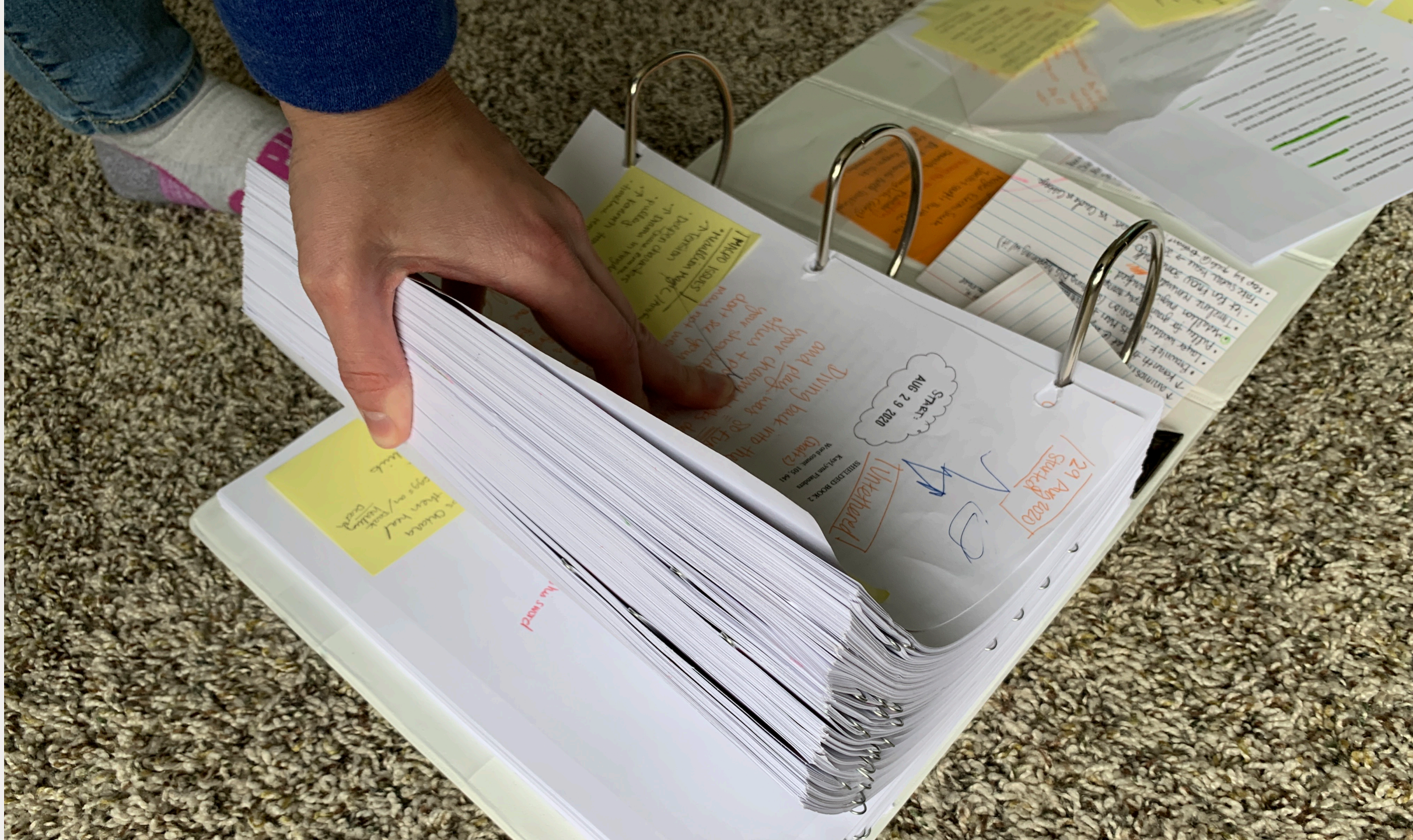
The man stepped forward, sword raised. I couldn't see his face under his hood—no nose, no eyes glinting, no sneer. Nothing. It was as if the man were made of smoke. I jerked my sword up to block his swing just before he struck.

I could feel the ring vibrating now with the magic it had absorbed. He was fast, but his attacks were almost predictable they were so precise. I stepped away, winded, while he prowled toward me again. I didn't have energy for a drawn-out battle. I visualized shifting the magic from the ring into the sword as Master Hafa had instructed. A wave of energy blasted out of my sword and I staggered back, but the man only seemed to ripple. It slowed him down for a fraction of a

realized never taught how to attack w/ power. w/ volves an accident.

Added realization

same as in Wild? check this.



One Last Check-in

- Check-in: LOVE LETTER
 - Did you stay true to the overall reason you wrote the story (or did you come up with a better one)?
- Check-in: MOOD
 - Do your words, and the choices you've made in how you tell the story, reflect that mood?



The End. Easy-Peasy!

- JK. It's not easy. But that doesn't mean you can't do it.
- CELEBRATE when you get to the end.
- Rest and repeat.

Remember: the stories you love the very most were never ever ever written in one draft.



Contact Me

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Want the slides?



Revision Hacks For Fresh Eyes

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THE PROCESS

1. Fresh Eyes (rest, print/reformat)
2. Love Letter and Mood
3. Create a Scene Map
(Chapter, Scene, Scene Job, Notes columns, plus anything else you want to track)
4. Fill out the Scene Map
 - A) Mark scenes within chapter
 - B) Write brief scene list on sticky note
 - C) Transfer scene list into excel and complete "Scene Job" column for each scene
 - D) Add ideas in the "Notes" column as you go
 - E) When you've done A-D for the whole book, write ideas from the "Notes" column on a sticky note, and place on first page of chapter with scene list
5. Revise chapter by chapter (complete the revisions on paper, and then transfer revisions to digital manuscript for that chapter)
6. Check in with Love Letter and Mood

Other Items to Watch

LINE EDIT TIPS

Be Intentional | Remember Mood & Lens

Tools: Merriam-Webster, OneLook, Etymonline

Page Check: ☐ Is there white space, and a variety of types of paragraphs?

Sentence-level Check:

- ☐ repetitive structures
- ☐ rhythm, pacing
- ☐ passive sentences
- ☐ clichés
- ☐ dialogue tags (said, asked are okay)
- ☐ showing vs telling

Word-level Check:

- ☐ to be verbs: am/are/was/were
- ☐ adverbs: -ly, really, very
- ☐ repetitive words
- ☐ crutch words
- ☐ filter words, like

to see	to notice
to hear	to decide
to think	to be able to
to touch	to note
to wonder	to experience
to watch	to feel (or feel like)
to look	can/could/couldn't
to seem	to realize
to sound	(publishingcrawl.com)

Note: DO NOT get rid of every passive sentence, adverb, crutch word, etc. This list is only to help you look for specific things in your writing so you can be more intentional with your choices in how you tell the story.

The End For Real