Version Control & File Hierarchy

Overall Shape (the big “aha”)

- Folder
- Files
- Edits

Project Folder *MyNovel_Title*

- **00_MASTER (DO NOT EDIT)**
  contains:
  MyNovel_MASTER.docx
- **01_WORKING DRAFTS**
  contains:
  Draft01_WithComments.docx
  Draft02_WithComments.docx
- **02_ARCHIVE/SNAPSHOTS**
  contains:
  Draft02_PreAcceptingChanges.docx
  Draft02_PostAcceptingChanges.docx

Version Progression

- **MASTER**
  ↓ Save As
- **WORKING COPY**
  ↓ Save As (Snapshot)
- **SNAPSHOT COPY**
  ↓ Accept/Reject Changes
- **CLEAN VERSION**
  ↓ Save As
- **NEXT PASS**
  WORKING COPY

Clear File Naming

Examples:
Draft03_WithComments.docx
Draft03_Snapshot.docx
Draft03_Clean.docx
Draft04_WithComments.docx

How to Use This Guide

Use this diagram as a reference, not a checklist. You don’t need to follow it rigidly or memorize every step. Instead, let it guide your habits as you edit. Before making changes, save a new version. Before accepting edits, create a snapshot. Keep one untouched master file and work only in copies. If you ever feel unsure, stop and save — that’s always the right move. This system exists to protect your manuscript, not complicate it. When in doubt, clarity and redundancy are your allies.

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