

Connection Problems Worsen

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

I am experiencing page-loads on the site of up to five minutes per page, and a current average of about four minutes per page. Because of this, until I track down the problem with my connection, I am going to be very, very scarce in the community. If you need to get in touch with me, please DO NOT use the community Private Message system – I'm not checking PMs right now. Use the e-mail link.

Note also that due to the double deadline (**Midnight Rain** proposal revision, plus **Talyn** first draft,) I'm reading all my mail, but not answering any writing questions via e-mail (and responding to very little e-mail of any sort). I'll keep checking the main discussion board – ask any writing questions you may have there. If I miss them, the other writers in the community will be able offer some help.

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An Astonishing First

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

This is my twenty-fifth-ish book (it's right around there, but I don't feel like looking at the bibliography to count). It's the first 250,000 word novel I've written. (You might argue,

validly, that The Secret Texts is a single novel in three covers, but it was not written that way. It was written as three 125,000-word books, over the course of about three and a half years.)

As I discovered today, doing a quick math check to make sure I wasn't falling too far behind on my schedule, it is also the first book on which I have ever, at ANY point in the project, gained ground.

If you do a search on **Talyn** in the little weblog search engine here, you'll find the entire list of project stats and work projections I posted when I started this thing. To save you time, though, I'll repost the relevent projection I first posted on April 30th, 2003.

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Words per day

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Seven days a week (195 days) 1254 wpd

Six days a week (156 days) 1672 wpd

Five days a week (130 days) 1986 wpd

The three, averaged, equal 1637.333 wpd. That was how many words I had to do each day to get the book done on time, depending on how many days per week I worked. Based on my current progress through the book (I have 103,892 words done at the moment) those stats have changed.

Here are my new current projections, including in parethesis the number of days left.

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Words per day

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Seven days a week (112) 1304 wpd

Six days a week (96) 1522 wpd

Five days a week (80) 1826 wpd

The three averaged equal 1550.667. I have actually given myself an extra 86.666 words per day of buffer. In the five and six-day ranges, I actually need to do fewer words to still finish on time, though because of the narrowing of the day ranges and the equalizing effect that has as you get closer and closer to a goal, in the seven-day range I have to do a few more. Usually, as I'm nearing the midpoint of the project (day 97/98 will be the actual midpoint) the five-day projection has reached such Brobdingnagian proportions – 3000 words or more per day – that I have to acknowledge that I couldn't have a bad writing day or take two days off in a row for anything less than a disaster. Say comet hitting the planet ... something like that.

2000 words per day is working well for me, and my buffer, which I've had to use a few times, is healthier than ever. And that's a remarkable first. RAH!

Oh, yeah. I have written 95,300 words since April 30th, 2003. (On **Talyn** alone, not including all the **Midnight Rain** stuff I've done, e-mails, community posts, this weblog, or the Broegga stuff.) Is this a good time to mention that I'm about 2000 legitimate e-mails behind, and starting to realize that most of them aren't going to get answered?

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A Voice Worth Hearing

written by Holly
July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

(With thanks to baka_kit for this link) – Take the time to visit iFeminists.com, which you could look at as either Libertarian Feminism or Conservative Feminism if you're looking for a label, but which supports what I prefer to think of as **real** feminism. I read down their list of positions on issues, muttering, "Yes, yes, yes, THANK you, YES, supportive of men's issues as well as women's issues – good, APPROVES the right to self-defense thank you very much"

Worth a look. Worth a contribution. If you're a joiner, worth consideration as being join-worthy. iFeminists.com offers a voice on women, men, rights and relationships that is worth hearing.

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The Attack of the Anonymous Moron

written by Holly
July 30, 2003
By Holly Lisle

Some e-mail is good, some is bad, some is breathtakingly stupid. Here, for your amusement and edification, one of the latter.....

I read the main section and then followed the link to world building. I didn't agree with any of it. Truthfully when I find a book that gives me that much of a look into the inner workings of the world the writer has created I put it down

and never pick it up again to finish it.

Similarly I have found their statement on the use of magic in error. Most of my favorite books have had the use of magic all through them. Never once did they tell where the magic came from, or how the people came to use it. Even Tolkein had magic all through his book and you didn't see any magical toilets and leaf blowers mentioned. That is just someone's narrow view of how a book should be constructed. Believe me if I ever read a book like that I'd toss it before ever finishing it.

They said that for every magical use, there has to be a negative counter reaction somewhere. The wielder of that magic will always have to pay for its use...BUNK, BUNK, AND MORE BUNK. Absolutely not true. I think that whoever wrote that never really wrote a book and probably never ever read a good one. Good stories don't need ecological details. Who cares if their trees breath argon instead of oxygen and are a brilliant blue? Unless it is directly related to a major event in the story it's excess baggage and BORING!

I could care less if the small edible creatures are outnumbered 100 to one by the larger carnivorous creatures. They actually said that if that happens, its sloppy writing and bad form. Well I have news for them. If I were editing the piece with that particular mention- the whole mention would have been cut out.

What's important is the story, and what makes the story? Characters, situations, and the events that move the character through those situations. Did I mention Scenery? Evolution? Ecology? Ecostructure? Or the number of smaller rodents v/s the number of bigger ones? Hell no.

Like Stephen King says in his book, "On Writing" that is just superflous 'fill-in' garbage that you don't need. You don't even need to go into detail explaining what the characters

looked like for the reader to envision them. They (the readers) do have a brain and if you do all the thinking for them how are they interacting with the story? That is why we read isn't it? To feel like we are participating in the story? All that stuff about building worlds and ecology is the stuff that 99 % of readers skip over. It give a story an overstuffed feeling and when I find that sort of thing in a book everytime I have also found two dimensional characters and half baked plots. Yes there is a giving and taking, use and paying for it but it happens not in the magical aspects of the book, but in the writing of nonessential garbage like you mentioned in your piece on the main page.

There is no reason to think that in order to write well one must follow your dictates much less utilize any of the useless stuff like you are sugesting. Do we a readers need all that stuff to picture something in our head? Do we need to understand the innerworkings of their governmental systems and ecological systems to understand the characters? HELL NO.

A character, a situation, and a reaction from the character to the situation. That's all you really need. Like a sentence, needs a subject, verb, and sometimes a completing thought. But mostly just subject and verb.

I started getting angry at the people that wrote such bull shit on this website and didn't read any more, after two different articles that I STRENOUSLY disagreed with I didn't read anymore of it. The first two articles (main section and link at the bottom of it) were crap. Just plain old everyday contrived crap, dressed up in fancy words to give it a good look. The content was still crap. The sad part is that who ever wrote this stuff is actually going to convince many young and struggling writers that they actually DO need follow the guidelines they've set forth and that's the true crime.

Makes you wish you got my e-mail, doesn't it?

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Taking Back Feminism

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

I identified myself very firmly as a feminist once upon a time. I was in sixth grade, the time was the early 1970's, and I could see what feminism was accomplishing for women, and I could see myself fighting that fight.

That was, of course, before NOW, the National Organization of Wackos, lost all sight of what feminism is and decided it was a platform for defending and even lauding child murderers like Andrea Yates, pushing an anti-male agenda in favor of female separatism and endless wails of 'down with patriarchy', and cheering deadly cults like Falun Gong which encourages women and children to immolate themselves in protest of repression, and which has been responsible for mass suicides and family murders.

Feminism, real feminism, is about women sharing the world with men, being equal partners with men, having equal rights and receiving equal pay for equal work. And that's pretty much it. It does not denigrate motherhood in favor of careerism – it supports choices. It does not encourage lesbianism while claiming that women who choose male lifemates are traitors to the cause. It supports choices. It sure as shit doesn't claim that women like Andrea Yates are cautionary tales for all

women who are mothers, one of those 'there but for the grace of God go I' examples of how risky motherhood is to your sanity, as if having kids damaged your brain, destroyed your capacity to judge right from wrong, and might just turn you into a murderer in spite of yourself; real feminism never portrayed murderers as victims, and never encouraged anyone to look at women as weak, helpless slaves to their hormones.

I've had enough. I say it's time we – the sane women of America and the men who love us – reclaim feminism from the lunatics who are currently tarnishing it. I say we stand up and say to NOW, "Your vision of feminism has nothing to do with what most American women believe or want. We don't want to live in a world without men, we don't want to live in a world with men in subjugation, and we don't want to live in a world where idiots like you are trying to destroy all the gains we've made by claiming we're too weak and fragile and helpless to make intelligent decisions or to take responsibility for our actions. WE ARE NOT VICTIMS. We are women, and we can stand on our own two feet, and take our knocks, and keep right on going. All we want is an equal (not preferential, just equal, thank you) hand in the poker game with a clean deck of cards. We'll take it from there."

Care to join me?

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Once More Into the Breach

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

First I'll note that I got my words today. 2067, to be exact. Like what I got, kicked ass on the scene, nailed the tone and the action, and killed somebody really likeable, and if you can do that in a chapter, you're doing all right. Fine. Good. That was this morning.

Yesterday I heard from Robin (my agent) that the editor who wants **Midnight Rain** had a few more questions and tweaks about the second outline I submitted. I'll need to do a third. I got the questions and tweaks, looked over them, figured out how to do the rewrites, and I'll be working on that (HAS to be spare time at this point) over the next couple of days.

But I have to confess to something akin to despair at this point. This now has all the earmarks of the work I did on the project for the four-book romance deal that the editor wanted, and told me was good to go, and then I heard we'd have a deal by Friday, and then I heard "no thanks."

At this point, I'm beyond hoping.

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The Things That Break

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

Do you remember the Twilight Mom Yodel? I do. It was when the neighborhood moms realized they could see fireflies outside the windows, and their heads popped out the back doors all up and down the street, and in voices that echoed into the hills and back, they shouted in more or less unison, "Baaaaaarbara!"

and “Liiiiiiiiiiiissa!” and “Jooooooooohn!” and “Tiiiiimothy!”, followed by “Time to come hooooooooooooome!”

Do you remember the significance of the noon whistle? I do. It was when the local plant (in our case, Alcoa) shut down for an hour so the guys could go home and sit down to lunch with their wives and kids. Banks closed at the noon whistle, and so did some stores, and the kids who were playing in the back yards together went rocketing back to their own homes because it was time for chicken noodle soup and peanut butter sandwiches and an opportunity to listen to your parents talking about their lives.

You can take this as Charles Dickens’ “best of times, worst of times” – we were already deeply embedded in Vietnam; a majority of the population believed what the government was telling everyone; we had J. Edgar Hoover in the FBI and Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House and the Cold War in full swing and McCarthyism echoing in the voice of Barry Goldwater; the odds of a woman who didn’t want to be a homemaker getting a good job were only slightly better than the odds of the chicken she was roasting standing up and whistling “Dixie”; and many women still went to college to get their MRS degree and then vanished thereafter into the land of Mrs. John Doe-dom, never to write their own last names, or even first names, again.

Girls knelt in the school corridors while teachers measured the distance from their hemlines to the floor, boys were sent home if the hair on the back of their necks touched their collars, and racism (as deeply entrenched as sexism) was still so pervasive in some places that people not only hadn’t really thought of it, but they hadn’t really heard of it.

There was much about those years that was bad, corrupt, cruel, much that was truly wrong, much that needed fixing.

But kids weren’t walking into high schools and shooting

teachers and classmates, either. They were not, for the most part, being raised by strangers. Community schools chose their own books and their own curriculums and graduated students who could read and write, add and subtract, and who knew at least the high points of their own nation's history. Those same kids weren't going home with a key around their necks to let themselves in, fix themselves a snack, lock the door tight behind them and not answer for anybody because they were the only ones there. There WERE neighborhoods, and neighbors, and if your mom had to go out for a minute the woman next door was home and you knew to go over there because you **knew** the woman next door, and her husband, and their kids.

Neighborhoods are gone, and the Twilight Mom Yodel is gone, and Lunch At Noon is gone. And those were good things. Real, solid things.

And I don't think we can bring them back. Not even for those who want them, not even for most of the women and men who realize that raising children to be decent human beings is the most important thing any human being can do. The world changed, and it did so by sacrificing families and the needs of kids on the alter of personal freedom and self-actualization for adults. It sacrificed men and the jobs men did to take care of their families, and the honor men got for providing for their families, in favor of "we're all the same." It sacrificed women who cherished staying home with their children and raising families. Women's liberation was supposed to be about the right to equal work for equal pay. The right to pursue careers. But not the obligation to, at the expense of the lives of our kids. Staying home to raise and teach their children is no longer an option for most women, and that's wrong. The brave new world sacrificed jobs that pay enough to allow one person to provide for a family and replaced them with jobs that nearly all families in the middle and lower classes must have two of simply to survive.

And no matter what the government sociologists say about day-

care being good enough, about more hours being spent in school and before-school programs and after-school programs not being harmful, kids aren't as capable as they were, they know less, they are as a whole more prone to violence and drug use and sexual experimentation at earlier ages and suicide and self-destruction all along the line. Kids raised by institutions don't have the experience of watching parents be good parents, either – and the institutions will always be there to raise their kids, raising the likelihood that children who were institutionalized from an early age will institutionalize their own children.

There are things about the world that are better today than they were in 1966, but what we as a nation and as a civilization do with our children is not one of those things.

The possibility that T.S. Eliot might have been right is never too far from my mind. He said:

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

I heard that whimper when my tiny daughter turned when I left her in day care and raised her arms to me and begged me not to leave her – when I listened to experts who insisted that she would do just as well with strangers as with me. I lost her for years, and got her back at last when she homeschooled high school. But nothing, nothing, could replace the years we lost, and now she is grown, out on her own, and I resent every day the state stole from me, and every hour I stole from myself, and I resent the liars who say, “Go take care of yourself first; as long as you're happy your kids will be fine.” I resent being stupid enough or gullible enough to believe that. I have another chance with my youngest. I don't intend to waste it.

We've broken something that I don't think we can fix. We've broken it so badly that most people can't even look at the pieces lying on the ground and guess what those pieces used to be, or how they once fit together. I can't see the consequences far down the road, and neither can anyone else. But I can see the results so far, and the results so far are bad.

Families and neighborhoods should not have been the things we let break and left lying on the ground. They were the best things we had.

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1700 Hard-Won Words

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

Time was the enemy today. I had to get up at five AM and be done with my writing by eight AM because of family needs and schedules. And I only got my first thousand words in that length of time. I sat down tonight after my little guy was finally asleep and got another seven-hundred, which gives me enough to stay even on my schedule, if not to pull ahead. Some days not falling behind is the best you can hope for. The writing today was practical, necessary stuff, but not the sort of inspiring work that gives you goosebumps while you're doing it. But I laid a neat little trap, and revealed a bit more of the villain, though you have to be looking close to realize that's what happened. All in all, a good day's work.

Scale

written by Holly

July 30, 2003

By Holly Lisle

92,041. That's how many words I have as I sit down to write this morning. It's a lot of words. For most of the 20+ books I've written to this point, I'd right now be doing the last loop of rope around the calf's fetlocks before stepping back and throwing my hand in the air. For each of the four Matrin novels, which ran 125,000 words apiece, I was 33,000 words away from the finish line – roughly 3/4th's of the way done and trying to make sure I had everything I wanted squeezed in for that book.

I'm 1/3rd of the way done. One THIRD. I still have twice as much to write as what I have already written. I've just barely passed the first pinch, I haven't hit the midpoint twist, anything that could remotely be considered downhill still lies far, far away, unseeable and unimaginable even with a good pair of binoculars.

But the things that amaze me are that I am on track pagewise, and I am actually having to condense and compress in order to keep on pace for the story I want to tell. The book, much to my astonishment, wants to be **longer**. It's a big story. I didn't realize how big until that fact sank in – that I could easily write the book at 500,000 words and not pad a single word, and that by doing it at 250,000 words, I'm going to have

to keep squeezing it into its too-tight jeans all the way to the very end and praying that the seams don't explode.

I still remember sitting with my manuscript for **Fire in the Mist**, desperately looking for points where I could squeeze in a tiny bit more action or one more a little scenelet to fill the thing out to the 90,000 words required by the contract. I have to laugh.

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Got the Contact Link for Broegga Worldbuilders Fixed

written by Holly
July 30, 2003
By Holly Lisle

A lot of Broegga info will be going up later today, but you can get your pass in to start doing mapping if you're interested. Sorry about the broken link. I'm off to get some writing done now.

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