

# Talyn Update

By Holly Lisle

Seems like a reasonable time for an update. I currently have 772 pages on Talyn, and 160,022 words. As a reminder, goal is 1200 pages and 250,000 words. This puts me roughly 64% of the way done with the first draft. I'm on schedule timewise, and because I've been exceeding my daily minimum lately, I'm gaining ground and edit days rather than losing them.

The story is past the mid-point twist and my folks currently look like they're doing a great job of gaining ground against an implacable enemy that seems to have all the odds in his favor. Of course, my guys are about to get the rug pulled out from under their feet and find out that their situation is much, much worse than they had thought.

I had about forty pages on 5/04 when I started work on **Talyn**. So I've written about 730 pages that I could keep since then. This doesn't include the couple hundred I've thrown out along the way, including that one big chunk a few weeks ago.

If you're curious about the book's progress, you can search the word **Talyn** in the search box at the bottom of the weblog and see exactly how it has been going, without any interruptions from other entries. I do love the Greylog search. It's fast and it seems to be comprehensive.

Onward, then. I have words to go before I'm done.

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# I Lost Today's Work – Nothing Else

By Holly Lisle

You should be able to hear the cheering from here. And thank God for Apple's eMacs, which are relatively cheap and very sturdy, and for Apple homeschooler discounts, which help. (And for **Vincalis the Agitator** selling to Germany, the money from which covered this.) Now I have a machine for the next week or however long it takes to get my beloved iMac back up and running, I will not fall 14,000-20,000 words behind on my deadline, and the kiddo ends up with a kid-proof computer when I get mine back.

And for being faithful to my backups. I lost about seven pages. Instead of 175.

Sagging into the chair, and looking at four AM tomorrow with real gratitude, because I'll still be able to work.

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## The Mac Died This Morning

By Holly Lisle

Died dead. I don't get a blue screen, I don't get a gray screen. All I get is a single low-toned beep, a black screen, and it sits there.

I'll trot it over to the Mac store today to see about repairs.

I'm not enthused, but neither am I devastated. If I lose the hard drive – and I suspect I will, my last full backup was two days ago, which means I've lost about 4000 words on the book. And a few e-mails. Except that my backup hard drive is Mac-formatted, so inaccessible to the damned Winbox. Which means that if I actually want to work on the book while the thing is being repaired, I've lost 175 pages, since the last time I worked on the thing downstairs, a few days ago, I was on page 625, and I'd just passed page 750 when it started making an odd noise and I saved and shut down, and then tried to restart it.

I might end up picking up a low-end refurb if I can get one for a decent price, just so I can keep working.

And I have had SUCH a lovely morning changing every password in every account I ever use for anything, too. Argh. I use really long letter/number passwords that I change routinely. But NOT all on the same day. I had the damned things all memorized, has a system for changing them, and now my system is screwed all to hell and I have about fifteen new passwords of ten to twenty characters apiece to memorize all at once.

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## **Good, Good Writing Day**

By Holly Lisle

I did 3020 words before 8 AM today. Had to get up at 3:30 AM to do it, but it's done, my day is mine, and I had the time to do a workshop on coming up with story ideas for the site later this same morning. With illustrations. While the kiddo was

doing some independent work on his homeschooling. And the laundry is underway again after a bad three-day stall. (Can't get everything done all the time – laundry is my arch-nemesis.)

Sure, I'll be asleep by 9 PM tonight, but I'm currently doing 14,000 words or better per week on **Talyn**, and meeting my other obligations, too. And I love the story I'm getting.

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## Missing the Point

By Holly Lisle

So SFWA (the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, putative professional organization for those named genres) has raised the rate for what it accepts as pro short fiction markets from .03 to .05 cents per word. I can understand, sort of. Looked at from a simply economic standpoint, it isn't unreasonable. After all, I think short fiction markets have been paying about that same amount since the forties and fifties, when that amount was actually something people might make a living on, if only barely. So, fine, now markets have to pay marginally better in order to be considered pro.

Only it isn't the markets that will change. Magazine fiction is not exactly in the midst of a Golden Age right now, and the few magazines that are hanging on are damned unlikely to raise their rates to meet the stipulations of an organization that has fallen increasingly out of publishing relevance.

I would almost guarantee that this rate hike is an attempt by SFW to improve that relevance ... and it is about its own

relevance that SFWA is missing the point. Because the real effect of the market rate hike will be to weed out from qualification a whole load of potential members in the very early, rocky phases of their careers. Which is something that SFWA keeps trying to do, from a lot of different angles.

During the ten years I was a member, SFWA chased its tale endlessly and to the frequent exclusion of all else on the question of who should qualify to be a member (though in all that frantic barking and racing it never forgot about its Nebula Awards; award-oriented members never passed up an opportunity to nominate each other for those, though the world fell down around them meantime). SFWA wants to have clout again – the sort of clout it had during the Golden Age of SF, when most SF writers were members and where pissing off SFWA could have an actual effect on the bottom line for publishers. SFWA sees the way to regain that clout as to have lots of professional members – folks like me who make a living writing – and ONLY professional members. SFWA in its early years claimed the loyalty of a huge percentage of the publishing genre pros at the time, and it fought hard for better contracts, better payment, and other issues that mattered to them. Now it argues that if it demands more of the markets it considers professional, and manages at the same time to keep out writers it considers unworthy, it will somehow regain that clout.

But SFWA in its halcyon years **grew its own powerful members from wet-behind-the-ears kids**, and made them strong.

And they made SFWA strong.

Now, seeing only what SFWA became and not how it got there, the organization is working tirelessly to eliminate from membership the writers who need it most, and might most benefit by it – **and benefit it in return**. People who need SFWA or an organization like it need to be a part of it at some level BEFORE they make their first sale. They need to belong

in an apprenticeship level right about the time they are finishing work regularly and are ready to start sending some of it out. It is at this point that writers make some heinous career mistakes (and in the early phases of a career, sales and the acquisition of agents can be as devastating as rejections, if they're the wrong sales, with the wrong contracts, to the wrong publishers or through the wrong agents. Publishing is a field that includes angels, devils, and slime-molds, and the slime-molds have a real affinity for newbie flesh.) By the time someone qualifies to join SFWA as it stands, (three short fiction sales to approved markets, or one novel sale to approved publisher in approved form – yeah, they've gotten picky), that writer no longer needs most of what the organization is best designed to supply.

Instead, SFWA sacrifices newbies on the altar of "Not Good For Our Professional Image" and so marginalizes its own relevance and destroys the sort of loyalty it could engender by letting beginners in on the ground floor of their careers, teaching them how to BE professionals, and creating its own strength. To have real clout today, SFWA needs to represent a heavy majority of those working in its genre. It doesn't, and every petty squabble over who is good enough to wear the sacred SFWA crown weeds out more people like me who become embarrassed by its actions, and inactions.

I stuck around for ten years; I wanted to see the organization matter, and there are some damned fine people in it who could make a difference if the clamor of the elitists were not so loud. But I finally realized that SFWA had **chosen** to miss the point regarding what it could really be – not an organization that throws itself parties and gives itself awards, but a tough, down-and-dirty fighter looking toward the needs of its members in a publishing industry that is as vicious as it has ever been to the unprepared and unarmed.

Good little conservative though I am, I wanted to fight for writers. If SFWA ever goes to war again on behalf of SF and

fantasy writers – including the beginners who need it most – I'll rejoin.

But I'm not much of a party hound.

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## To the Concerned Folks at FM

By Holly Lisle

Hi, guys. Don't panic and don't fret.

I haven't left the community, nor have I been scared off. At the moment, I simply don't have the time or the interest to deal with a handful of petty twits who want to use the community I created to drum up traffic for their site and have chosen personal attacks on me and attacks on the policies by which I run the place as their way to do it.

It just isn't worth my time.

I will note that the next one of the nitwits who chooses to act like an asshole on the way out the door is going to be first poster pinned in perpetuity on a brand-new members-only Slamming-The-Door board, with a Crit the Crap contest featuring his or her exit post. If you must deal with assholes, you might as well have some fun with them. It beats being angry.

But right now, I don't have the time to deal with them at all. So you guys get some writing done of over there, and I'll get some writing done over here. And I'll drop in sooner or later to say hello.

# Blasts from the Past

By Holly Lisle

I uncovered the disk that has the archives from the old FM Community (on Network 54) on it. I rolled through some of the old posts I had there, and found that I'd written some neat things between June 2000 and June 2002 when we moved over to the DCForums community on our own site. I found writing information, general discussion, a few rants ...

I'm too swamped to write up a lot of new material for the weblog right now, but the material I wrote for the old community currently isn't available anywhere else. So I'll start fishing out some of the good bits, adding explanatory text as necessary, and re-introduce the best of my old material to the site. In spite of some truly brilliant material from other folks, I won't be using anything but my work. I would like at some point to post the archives of the old community, but I have to be able to eliminate the private material (from closed and members-only boards first) before I can put the whole thing back up again, and will only use the public posts if I can present them whole and in context to each other.

Anyway, I'll post the good stuff. It will be new to a lot of you and at least fresh again to most of the rest of you. And you might find something useful. Here's today's pick.

*The answer below is in response to a question about what sort of scenario could poison an entire planet excluding a small*



*portion that was fortuitously saved.*

## **Trees, pollution, and the Whole-Planet question**

Holly Lisle (Login: hollylisle) 2000/06/25 01:07

Holly Lisle's Forward Motion Writers' Forum

In response to: Delurking (and a question) – Miaka at 02:57 PM on Wednesday 21 June 2000

Hi, Miaka. First, thank you for your enthusiasm about Diplomacy of Wolves. I'm delighted that you enjoyed it.

Next, and to the point of your question, first you're going to need to consider the mechanism of a pollution spill that could poison an entire planet save for one tiny corner, which is somehow spared.

Planet are big. In spite of current politically-correct "It's A Small World" rhetoric and "Don't Use Aerosol Sprays – You'll Destroy The World's Ozone" propaganda, it **isn't** a small world, and the amount of crap thrown into the atmosphere by volcanic eruptions far exceeds the annual production of all airborne pollutants by all industrialized nations – and volcanoes haven't managed to wipe out life on Earth yet.

So if you're talking about a chemical spill that poisons the entire planet, you're talking about vast quantities. Not a supertanker, not a fleet of supertankers. You're talking about entire armadas of supertankers emptying their poison into the world's oceans.

Not something likely to have been done by accident. And (as mentioned upstream) polluted water anywhere becomes polluted water everywhere – wind and evaporation and tides and Brownian motion will bring the poisons eventually to even the most secluded of landmasses and the most pristine of vistas.

Consider rethinking your scenario – George Lucas used the Jungle World and the Desert World and the Ice World (complete with big top-of-the-food-chain predators but no bottom-of-the-food-chain prey) and he succeeded, but his lax worldbuilding has always sort of ruined for me what were otherwise pretty good movies. I don't think I'm completely alone in this.

Consider a localized effect – that can be bad enough for the people dealing with sudden desertification and complete devastation of the local ecology and climate. And it, unlike the “whole planet” scenario, can be realistically achieved. And has been. Lebanon, now a desert terrain, was once the home of great forests of tall cedars, and rich, fertile soils.

Holly Lisle

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never give up on your dreams  
writing, reading & magic  
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## CC2 Pro and the Workaround

By Holly Lisle

CC2 Pro – Campaign Cartographer 2 Pro, the program I have been trying without success to run on my WinCrap XP setup, is finally up and running correctly. But not on WinCrap XP.

I have it going on my Mac, using Virtual PC and Windows 98 SE. It works perfectly, now I'll be able to do the maps I need for **Talyn**, and XP only cost me a couple of months in time I didn't

have.

I don't fault ProFantasy.com for it not working on my machine. They did yeoman work to create a patch to fix it, and I'm sure on most machines it works. It doesn't on mine, but that isn't because they didn't move Heaven and Earth trying to get it to.

If you're running 98 SE, or have Virtual PC and 98 SE on your Mac, I highly recommend CC2 Pro as your mapmaking software. If you have 2000 or XP, you may be in for rough weather – but if you can get it going, it's worth it.

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## **Before We Have Names**

By Holly Lisle

Food for thought

And one of many reasons I think abortion is ethically wrong even in the first trimester.

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**“I’m getting history on the**

# carpet”

By Holly Lisle

The kidlet and I discovered something wonderful today (and I owe Sheila Kelly a huge thanks for this, since she gave a link for a paleontology kit in her weblog).

We picked up an archeology kit from Scholastic the last time we were at Toys ‘R Us – it’s called “Mysteries of Egypt” and it comes with a five-or-six pound compressed stone pyramid, hammer, chisel, paints and brushes, safety glasses, and booklet with some nice starter information on the history of Egypt and the work of archeologists. My son and I had done some previous reading on Egypt. I read him the history in the booklet, and he knew a fair amount from our previous reading. So I showed my little guy, who is five, how to hold the chisel and the hammer and turned him loose. He knew there were artifacts in there.

He worked for a good fifteen minutes before he got the first inkling of where one might be. It took him another three hours to free the first two artifacts – a small Sphinx and a hieroglyphic tablet.

In the meantime, while he worked with amazing intensity and excitement, we talked about the history of ancient Egypt, the work of archeologists, science, how things get buried over time, and a bunch of other goodies. We’re good for at least six more hours of digging over the next couple of days, I had to peel him away from the pyramid when it was time to go do other things, and he has fallen in love with archeology.

We did art, writing, science, math, history, spelling, and geography (measuring the artifacts, cataloging his dig, filling out a site survey in our best attempt at proper format, drawing the uncovered artifacts, finding Egypt, and so on) and we had three lovely hours together while I watched him

uncover something thrilling. This is what education should be.

And he gave me the best line I've had in days; with little bits of stone flying everywhere as he worked, he told me, "Mom, I'm getting history on the carpet."

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