

Progress

written by Holly
September 23, 2004
By Holly Lisle

A correlation between the dual nature of the hero and the heroine of LGD just clicked for me. It should add some nice shading to the conflict they're facing, both with each other and with outside forces.

Part of the fun of writing is discovering the way that elements you never planned fall together.

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Oh, Yeah. The Hurricane

written by Holly
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Lest I forget. Another hurricane is headed my way.

Hoo-ah.

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The Stripper Cop Dilemma

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This, however, is going to drive me nuts. Set-up for the book was that I had to have a cop go undercover as a stripper to investigate serial killings of exotic dancers.

I've had good, qualified consultants on this project, and my first detective-consultant said that no department would ever okay that ... but gave me a way that it could legitimately happen anyway. So I ran with it in that direction.

But now, equally-qualified consultants are saying, yeah, it could happen. Undercover cops in life-or-death investigations have had to do things a lot more distasteful than get nekkid and dance on a stage. Different police departments have different rules, and those differences apparently vary wildly.

I contacted the Atlanta PD in the hopes of consulting with someone there and getting this point right – could they? Couldn't they? – but after presenting a first chapter and outline on request, never heard back.

So it all comes down to, I'm on my own and guessing. If I skip the whole "we shouldn't be doing this but we have to, so we're going to slide it under the radar" scenario, I lose my ending. If I keep it, though, does the story lose credibility?

Sometimes, I swear, the temptation to say, "Fuck it, it's fiction," gets just about unbearable.

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Yesterday, Today

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Finished with fifty-eight pages of revision done yesterday, which pretty much kicks ass. That included about three thousand new words added ... and about the same number removed. Ended up with a net loss of three hundred words and change. But that's okay. I have a few scenes that I'm going to have to add in – I'll make up the loss.

And killing people I like got put off until today. I'm not expecting another fifty-page day. Or even a forty-page one. Twenty would be good.

Heard back from one of my exotic dancer consultants; she went into deep detail and came up with some amazingly useful comments. A couple of offhand remarks she made will allow me to fix a persistent plot problem I was having. Nice serendipity on that. And everything else either validated my research or corrected areas where I couldn't FIND any research.

I swear, one of the best things about being a writer is that people will TALK to you, honestly and in great detail, about their work, their lives, the struggles they've gone through and their hopes and dreams. I had the same experience to a degree as an RN, but there is always this barrier, because as an RN, you're the person who sooner or later may well claim the need to physically invade your patient's privacy, inflict pain, or be the bearer of horrible news. And patients lie to nurses only slightly less often than they lie to cops. "Honesht to God, just two beersh." "No, I haven't ever taken

illegal drugs." "I couldn't be pregnant: I'm a virgin." "He just fell down those stairs." "She was playing with the cigarette and burned herself like that."

People tell the truth to fiction writers because fictions writers aren't going to expose them. Or hurt them. Or do anything with that truth except disguise it as more fiction. And when people tell the truth, they're wonderful.

Most of my faith in humanity, what of it there is, has been restored by getting out of nursing and becoming a writer.

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My Ghost Just Came to Life for Me

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Something supernatural that I hadn't planned just clicked: it'll tighten the story; add layers; create a gorgeous bit of mystery and suspense.

And it was right there in front of me the whole time, but I didn't see it until just this minute.

Hah!

AND I just checked and I've already done more than forty pages of editing today.

Double HAH!

Theme

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Thinking out loud ...

First theme – Finding a new dream when Life destroys the most cherished dream

What else?

Living a life that matters

Good versus evil ... but that's basic.

Combating obsession? Maybe. Finding a way to put important obsessions into a perspective that will allow a life, too?

Maybe. There's more here. I'm not quite nailing it down.

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The Thing About Comments

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I decided before I started SILENT BOUNCE to disable comments on this diary. I had a couple of reasons. The first is that it's too easy to "write to the audience" if I get feedback from the diary's readers – "Real Writers ... B0unCE" became much more about posting something interesting for its readers to read, and much less about writing about writing, after I added comments.

The second is that comments create an emotional connection for me – I'm bouyed by the kind and encouraging comments ... and hurt by the nasty ones. I need to keep my emotion focused strictly on the writing, and avoid the distraction of walking around angry about some particularly snippy attack.

The third is that if I permit comments, I then have to watch them. Some comments require a response. Some deserve a response. But I don't have the time or the energy to focus on responding, vetting, and following up. I have my e-mail on the site turned off for the same reason.

However, I have to manually turn off comments for each post. Sometimes I forget.

If you see a post with comments enabled, and you don't see a line somewhere in the post that says, "I have enabled comments for this post," please don't post. The comment form is there in error, and any comments, even the kind ones, which have been the only ones I've received so far, will be deleted.

I deeply appreciate knowing that you're out there reading what I'm writing. Your presence (verified by the steady climb in page views and other site stats) reminds me that people are waiting for the next book, and that I need to stay on track.

For the time being, though, I need to keep a wall up, even if at the moment it's a thin one.

Today's Task: Kill People I Like

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I somehow managed not to make the couple of on-stage murders in LGD personal enough. And Robin (my agent) was fierce. "We have to care about them. We have to love them."

And she was right, of course.

So today, my job is to take essentially faceless victims, and give myself a reason to cry when they die. If I don't hurt, the scenes won't work.

This is the part of the job that isn't fun.

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About twenty pages

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Didn't get the forty pages of revision I'd hoped for, but did get through twenty. Good enough.

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Writing at this ridiculous hour

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Brief update. We made it through Ivan just fine. We got a lot of rain, a lot of wind, and one tree limb down, but Frances was much harder on us.

I've had a few unwelcome days off following that – have been sick. Bleh. But this morning I have insomnia, which may be a way of making up for lost time. I'm going to see if I can make some headway on LAST GIRL DANCING; I'd like to complete about forty more pages of revision before daylight hits and I discover that, yeah, NOW I can sleep.

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