

DTD–319 words, and the 10% mark

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I rolled over 25,000 words tonight. 25,006, to be exact. Which means I'm ten percent of the way done with my estimated minimum of my first draft. (How's that for vague?)

Was going to quit a bit earlier because I have a nasty headache, but the temptation to hit that round number got the better of me.

So. Tonight I simply filled in details from last night's scene. It felt rushed as I was working it, and when I read it tonight, I discovered I was right.

So poor Aleksa has not yet begun to understand why she has been taken prisoner, or who her captor really is. I'll start into that tomorrow night...but that whole thing is going to take a while, and have to be split over several scenes, as the full scope of the mess into which she's embroiled herself begins to take shape.

I'm going to go straight to sleep tonight—well, after hunting down a couple aspirin.

I'll check in tomorrow to see how you're doing with your book.

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Time Out: Offering Advice and “Write A Book With Me”

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I’ve noticed a problem with folks offering writing advice in the “Write A Book With Me” threads, and I figure I’d better point out the problem before it gets bigger.

There are some folks here besides me who do this professionally. There are some folks here who have written a lot but never sold anything (some, I suspect, because they haven’t yet tried)—and there are some folks here who have not yet written anything.

And I’ve noticed that the most aggressive “you should do this” advice is coming from that latter segment.

So here’s the deal on advice.

I CANNOT answer all the posts. I read every single one, I answer questions as I get to them, I cheer you on (whether I write a comment or not).

So I welcome you folks encouraging each other as a critical, wonderful part of this game we’re playing. And frankly, some of the folks here are as qualified to offer suggestions as I am.

BUT...

First, if you’ve never written a book, don’t tell other people how they should do it. This seems like an obvious thing to me, but apparently...not so much.

I’ve written more than 30 novels, a bunch of non-fiction, a

bunch of short stories, **and I STILL don't tell people how they should do it.**

I don't know how you SHOULD write a book, and neither does anyone else.

I do know how I've written and sold a bunch of them, so when I offer advice, I offer what has worked for me, in the hope that it may also work for you.

If you're offering advice, phrase it as: "I had a similar problem, I took the following steps to fix it, you might find this useful."

I also ask questions, because in my experience, one good question is worth several pages of "here's how you can fix that." It allows the writer facing the problem to find his own ways to solutions. If something someone has written stirs up a huge question in your mind, ASK IT.

If someone asks you a story question here, you don't have to answer it here. But do think about how that question relates to the story you're writing. It'll frequently point out a hole you need to address.

Finally, from this point forward, any post offering any sort of suggestions or advice that includes ANY sort of "I'm sure Holly would say..." phrase is going to be deleted. No questions, no apologies. I've let a couple of these slide, but the last batch were full of such atrocious advice that from this point forward, I don't care if you've written the Golden Mean of Writing—if you stick my name on it, it's gone. I'm the only one who gets to say "what Holly would say."

You get to say what you would say—and that is a thing of beauty all on its own.

Finally, links to questions I've answered elsewhere.

- "Can you read something I've written?"

- “How do I crit?”
- “How do I revise my story?”
- “How do I start my story?”
- “What is conflict, and how do I use it?”
- “What kind of questions should I ask myself?”
- “How do I format my manuscript?”
- How do I finish a story?
- How do I plot using notecards, and why would I want to?
- The free Professional Plot Outline e-book and course.
- “I have problems with description.”
- “How do I make my fantasy world better?”
- “How do I find my writing voice?”
- “What if I’m working with a collaborator?”
- “Why am I writing anyway?”
- “How do I write suckitudinous fiction?”
- “How do I write scenes?”
- “I’m getting bogged down in worldbuilding.”
- “How do I choose a writers’ group (or start one of my own)?”

These are just a few of the articles and workshops on the site. If you haven’t gone over the site, you may find the answer to something that’s been causing you problems already answered.

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DTD – 585 words, and a prisoner

written by Holly
July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

Got started, almost couldn't make myself stop—and ran a bit over as it was.

A bit of Ki's motivation for living as he does; the aftermath of the explosion; and Aleksa taken prisoner...and damned curious about why.

It was a great way to start the writing week.

If you're pacing me, you can stop at 500. And for anyone playing Write A Book With Me... how did your writing day go?

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S-A-T-U-R-D-A-Y! Write!

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

Dunno. When you resort to Bay City Rollers puns, it may be proof that Hell **has** frozen over.

Anyway...

This is the official Write A Book With Me Saturday thread.

How's it going? How are the words? How's the story?

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Write A Book With Me—Friday

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

The official Friday Night WABWM posting thread.

Having fun? Making progress? Stopping to think or to plot?
What's going on with your project?

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How Long Can You Write A Book With Me?

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I've had several folk apologize for showing up late, and more ask me if there was some way I could keep this going after I wrapped **The Book That I'm STILL Calling *Dreaming The Dead*** (GOT to come up with a real title for that).

I thought maybe giving you a look at my planned schedule would let you stop worrying.

I'm planning the book for 300,000 words. I have about 250,000 words plotted (estimated), and I ALWAYS write longer than my

plot, because I add things. Currently, I'm adding scenes to my outline at a rate of about one new plot card for every two existing plot cards (which, if this continues, would bring the book in at around 333,000 words.

But first draft, let's say I actually keep it to the already wildly insane length of 300,000 words.

I'm writing five days a week at 250-500 words most days. Let's say I lean more toward 500 than 250, and so have two 500-word days for every day that I fall asleep at 250. $500 + 500 + 250 = 1250 \div 3 = 417$ (roughly).

So, on average, I'm plugging through this thing at 417 words per day, five days a week. That's 2085 words per week, which comes pretty close to what I wrote this week.

There are 52 weeks in a year, but I'm probably not going to be writing Christmas week. Or doing much of anything else. Gotta have a vacation sometime.

So figure 51 working weeks, and assume that I never get sick and never miss a planned writing night (which, considering the small number of words I'm doing, is a possibility) and realize that in one year, I'll have done 106,335 words of the first draft. In two years, I will have done 212,670 words of the first draft. I already have 24,000 words done, so in Year Three, I'll still have 63,330 words to go. Divide by 417, my average number of words per day, and you'll get 152 work days remaining. Remember that those days will be worked out at five, not seven, days per week, and discover that I have about eight months of writing to do in Year Three to finish the first draft.

After the first draft will come revision. Not sure how I'll run that.

But...

Nearly three years. That's what I've set aside to write the first draft of this book the way I want it. Barring unforeseen circumstances and desperate situations, I'm going to be chugging along on this for a good long time.

So if you aren't ready to start yet, not a problem. If you have a friend who wants to do this, but wants to rebuild the engine on his '79 Camaro first... odds are pretty good he'll have time.

Will I keep doing this after I finish DTD? I don't know. That's several years off, and things change. Let's see where we all are then.

In the meantime, however, I'm done for the week. Around 10 tonight, I'll post the Friday Night Write With Me post, and around 10 PM Saturday night, I'll put up the Saturday post. And I'll be back to work Sunday night.

Have a great weekend. See you Sunday.

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462 words on DTD, and writing when I was too tired to write

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I actually like what I got. I'm not convinced this whole scene is solid, but it beats the hell out of the lame one I initially had written on the index card. It is, either way,

good enough for first draft, because it moves the story forward, and it's done.

And I went in planning for the absolute minimum words, and instead rounded out the scene.

And I rolled over 24,000 words at the same time. 24,102, to be exact.

So it was a pretty good night, especially for a night when I just didn't feel like writing.

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DTD—300 words. And THEN they exploded.

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

Too tired to push on this. Had a long day, and got a lot done on **THE WRITING CRAFT**. The episode in progress is **Doing the Work: Finding and Keeping Your Motivation**. I like what I'm getting there.

But it sort of wiped me out for the write tonight, so with an even 300 new words done, I'm going to go to bed. I'll read comments and answer questions tomorrow.

Had a great explosion at the end of this section, though. And fun getting to it.

G'night, everyone. See you tomorrow.

DTD-510 words, and Diya twists my mind

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I was completely stunned by the final twist in tonight's scene. Diya (currently the name for my petite, charming master of evil) has been looking for someone for a very long time. She found out tonight from Derok that a probable ally has returned to New York City, and this ally could be her someone.

I thought I had an idea who she was looking for. Tonight, she told me...and my jaw is still on the floor.

I have to ask myself some questions about how, and who, and when, and why. But not tonight. This scene flew, it ran away with me, it was fun, and though I'm done with the scene, I now know I'm going to have to get inside Diya's head more, because she's got layers I never even guessed at.

For folks playing Write A Book With Me on Intermediate, you can wrap your count at 500. (Well, you can wrap it anywhere you please, actually... but...)

7-9-2009-Late comment:

Because I wiped out last night and missed reading all of these, I'm going to go through and specifically answer questions. Please take my cheering for your success as

implied.

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DTD: 626 words, and villains in the penthouse

written by Holly

July 13, 2009

By Holly Lisle

Okay. So it WAS something I ate, and it clobbered both Matt and me. The kid ate the same thing, and lots of it, and came through unscathed—which I guess is the advantage of being eleven with a cast-iron stomach.

Anyway. I'm feeling much better tonight, and got sucked into the story when I met my second villain. She's my primary antagonist—and she wasn't at all as I'd imagined her. She and Derok got to talking, and while he perpetually gives me the creeps, she's rather charming on the surface. Since I know what she's like underneath, this exterior charm actually made her scarier to me.

For those of you doing the Intermediate Level of the "Write a book with me" game, I got carried away when they began playing off each other and ran over my planned word limit.

You get to quit at 500 words if you're so inclined.

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