

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly, or How to Choose a Writers' Group

written by Holly
December 23, 2009
By Holly Lisle

I know I'm not in the majority when I recommend that you get involved with a writers' group. Dean Koontz apparently loathes them, Harlan Ellison despises them, and I've read advice from dozens of other pros whose work I love and whose opinions I value who say writers' groups will do everything from steal your soul to cause your writing to break out in pox.

Nonetheless, I strongly recommend that you get involved with a good writers' group when you're getting started. I credit what I learned from my early groups (plus enormous amounts of hard work and persistence) with leading me to publication.

The Unknown Writers' Group and Schrodinger's Petshop (Essentially Bizarre, But Cats Like Us) pushed me to succeed.

But I was lucky. I got in on the ground floor of each group, and each group was good. I heard horror stories of other writers' groups in the area (we acquired a lot of their fallout members) and discovered that not all groups are created equal.

In this column I'll assume that you have at least one writers' group in your area with an opening. (Many places do. If you don't, we'll fix that in a later column.) Print this list off, take it to a meeting or two with you, and keep your eyes and ears open. Here's what you look for.

Good, Bad, or Ugly?

Rule #1

- **Does the group have a clearly defined goal, preferably in writing?**

This can be something as simple as “We want to see something new from each writer at each meeting,” or as elaborate as a mission statement. However, if the members of the group haven’t taken the time to define their purpose, they probably don’t know where they’re going. And neither will you.

Rule #1 Example

“Purposes and Goals:

Schrodinger’s Petshop, established in May of 1988, grew out of a core of aspiring science fiction and fantasy writers who wanted to write better and sell our work, and who weren’t able to find a writers’ group or program that met our needs and interests. We’ve met on a regular basis since, constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of our admittedly esoteric membership.

Our main goal is to help each other get published. We do this by presenting and participating in workshops on our varied areas of expertise, by reading and critiquing each other’s work, and by encouraging each other to submit finished works. We also provide networking, contacts with professionals in the field, and a chance to meet other local talents with similar interests.”

(This is a quote from the Schrodinger’s Petshop Handbook, which I wrote in 1988. It was the keystone to our keeping our group good. If you’d like to read the complete rules, here’s the text.)

Rule #2

- Does the group have any interest in the type of writing you want to do?

This may seem irrelevant to you—you may be thinking “We’re all writers, right? They’ll be glad to help me.” Unfortunately it isn’t true. The worst horror stories I got were from writers who wanted to write SF or romances and attended meetings at the other large local group in the area. They found themselves and their work attacked as substandard, unworthy, and stupid—in spite of the fact that many of them did very good work. They were not, you see, considered sufficiently “literary” to be worth anybody’s time.

Rule #2 Example

“Writer Requirements:

We are open to members of all levels of experience, and of all ages and interests. We have members who are experienced in novel-writing, in short-fiction writing, in non-fiction, and in poetry. However, we are strongly biased in favor of science fiction, fantasy, and horror (speculative fiction) subject matter. We are not a general-interest writers’ group. If you want to write mainstream or non-fiction or works in other genres, but have no interest in speculative fiction, we are not the group for you.

While we have a great deal of fun at our meetings, we are not geared toward socializing. We are a working writers’ group, and our main premise is that writers write. If you join, be prepared to read what you are working on, to take criticism, and also to give it. We’ll help you achieve your goal of getting your stories into print—your goal is one we share.

Welcome to Schrodinger’s Petshop.”

Rule #3

- **Does the membership arrive and get to work, or does everyone just stand around and talk about writing?**

Pretty early in the meeting, everyone should start moving toward the chairs. Manuscript pages ought to start appearing in hands, and pens and notepads ought to come out. You should see people beginning to discuss the writing they have in front of them, in whatever critique format they use.

The group should not spend more than half an hour hanging out and gossiping.

Rule #4

- **Are there any rules for people who are criticizing each others work to follow?**

This is so important. One nasty writer with a mean streak can destroy a talented beginner, and use his critique time as a way to grind the “competetion” into powder. This is stupid, it sucks, and it’s pointless.

There is a better way. Critiques should deal only with the work, should be constructive, and should be short. If one person takes more than ten minutes to discuss a piece of work, that’s a good sign that the meetings are poorly controlled.

Rule #4 Example

“Schrodinger’s Rules of Critiquing:

1) Critique the writing, never the writer. Never say, “You are...” or “You should...” Instead say, “The writing is...” or “The story should...”

2) Find what is right in each piece as well as what is wrong.

3) Don’t say, “This is how I would write it;” how you would

write it isn't the point.

4) Remember that subject matter is personal. You don't have to like a story to give it a fair critique.

5) Remember what your biases are and critique around them.

6) Remember that real people wrote this stuff, and real people have real feelings."

Things you may not say while critiquing.

"That's awful."

"That's stupid."

"You couldn't write your way out of a paper bag."

Rule #5

- **Are there any rules for people whose work is being criticized to follow?**

Again, this is essential. People get very defensive when others are telling them what they did wrong, and their first impulse seems to be to argue. The critique-ee needs to have rules to follow, too, and the first of these needs to be "Shut up and listen." If people have taken the time to read or listen to what you wrote, take the time to hear what they have to say about it.

Rule #5 Example

"Schrodinger's Rules of Being Critiqued:

1) Listen. The person who is speaking has taken the time to listen to your work, and wants to help you find ways to make it better.

2) Wait until everyone has finished critiquing before making comments.

3) *Explain only if necessary. Don't rebut.*

4) *Take notes.*

5) *Realize that everything can be improved.*

6) *Be willing to make changes. Conversely, don't change anything you feel must remain in order to make the story yours.*

Things you may not say when being critiqued.

"You're wrong."

"You're an idiot."

"Your mother was a hamster and your father smelled of elderberries.""

Rule #6

- **Does the group have set guidelines for behavior, and a way to remove troublesome members?**

Shouldn't be necessary, should it? After all, everybody's an adult. Or at least literate. At least that's the theory.

In fact, however, a removal rule is necessary. You can get a great group together, and you can be having wonderful meetings, and someone will unsuspectingly bring the Writer From Hell with him to a meeting. This writer will ignore the rules, attack the other writers, try to hog the meeting, refuse to even consider changing a word of his precious story, and make life miserable for everyone.

The group **MUST** have a way, stated in advance, of getting rid of this nightmare.

Example #6

“Membership Guidelines:

Attending meetings is a privilege and not a right. Memberships can be revoked—for failure to follow critiquing rules, for failure to follow protocol in being critiqued, or by a general vote of the other members.”

Rule #7

▪ **Do the people who are there like each other?**

If the other folks at the meeting spend most of the meeting talking about what a bitch Dorothy is or how they suspect John is writing in English as a poorly-learned third language, or if they snap at each other, cut each other down, or are brutal with each other’s manuscripts, RUN AWAY! They will be no kinder to you and your work.

You’ll need a few meetings to get a feel for the group dynamics. You’ll usually find that the group falls into one of the following types:

1. **Circle of Friends**
2. **Master and Students/Slaves, or**
3. **Sharks and Dinner.**

Rule #7 Examples

▪ **Circle of Friends**

Usually a group of writers all working on about the same level. Either nobody has published yet, or a few have started making small sales, or everyone has started selling, or a bunch of pros got together to hang out on Saturday nights. Sometimes you can find a Circle of Friends open to people working at all levels, from beginner to pro, but this has to be a group that is very tightly run or it will end up being a Master and

Students group.

Schrodinger's Petshop managed to be an all-levels Circle of Friends for years (though the group did eventually disintegrate), but while it held together we were careful to enforce the handbook rules, we threw out anyone who broke them, and we had no group leader, by design.

We also actively recruited beginners. Most groups aren't like this.

In general, your best bet for a writing group will be a Circle of Friends on your level.

▪ **Master and Students**

Usually a group put together by one pro and open to beginners. This is generally designed as a teaching group, with the pro as the teacher, and this kind of group can be either good or terrible, depending on the pro.

If you have someone who loves to teach, who is genuinely interested in seeing the members get published, and whose work appeals to you enough that you think you could learn from him, then a Master and Students group will be okay.

If, however, your existence in the group is solely to provide ego-booster for the master, then you end up with a **Master and Slaves** dynamic, and you aren't likely to get much that will help you get published.

Listening to the master read a new chapter of his book every week on the theory that this will allow you to see a work in progress, while never getting to present your own work, is a sure sign that you are in the presence of a raving egotist. Say bye-bye.

- **Sharks and Dinner** Any tightly knit clique that tears apart those not in the Inner Circle.

In a Sharks and Dinner group, you'll notice all the signs of evil in the first meeting or two—people afraid to read their work to others, people speaking viciously of those not present, brutal critiques of works that are read, open hostility toward anything not written in the group's approved style or genre, people that come to one meeting and never return, and a general Fall of the House of Usher darkness.

NEVER join a Sharks and Dinner group. Remember, even if they let you be one of the Sharks... when they smell blood in the water, sharks will eat their own.

Rule #8

- **Does everybody bring work to each meeting, or do you hear from the same three people?**

In general, avoid all groups where you get to hear from only one or two writers, and everyone else sits around and talks about what they'll write someday.

Rule #9

- **Is anybody happy to see you?**

Do people make an effort to include you? Did anyone ask you your name? Did you like anyone there?

Furthermore, are you happy to be there? Do you look forward to going to meetings? When you get home, do you want to write, or do you want to smash your computer to pieces and investigate careers in ditch-digging?

If it isn't fun, if it doesn't add something positive to your life, don't waste your time.

NOTE: If this article resonates with you, and you want to meet other writers who share your passion and who are working in a friendly, supportive environment, come hang out with us and make progress on your writing in my free writing community.

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Reader Bonus: 396 Books and Other Resources Writers Recommend

written by Holly Lisle

December 23, 2009

By Holly Lisle

I used to have a lot of fun with the folks on my list back when I only sent emails to one group of people.

Well, I'm back to just mailing to one group of people. So I'm saying it's time to have some fun again.

This is what my list guys and I built together back when – still cool and useful years later.

And it reminds me of the days when I loved getting email, back when I heard from people I liked about things that interested me.

I want that back – not just for myself, but also for you. Email that's only the good stuff.

Let's make that happen.

Holly

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Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Cultural Appropriation: A question for other writers

written by Holly
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The objective of writing science fiction, fantasy, (and fiction in general) is to explore the world of what could be, what should be, what should never be – to challenge your own assumptions, to discover, uncover, or invent new ways of thinking about life and new ways of seeing the world, humanity, and life, to expand beyond what is.



Standing directly in the road to this exploration is the politically correct stance that (if you're white) you have no business using elements of anyone else's race or culture for your own personal gain.

The problem with this is that if you're a science fiction / fantasy / speculative fiction writer, it's your damn job to reach beyond your world and the way it works to understand life lived in other ways, other places, and other times, to turn all of that inside out and sideways, to ask questions about it and answer them with actions in your work, and to then present what you've created for people who are capable of appreciating that the world they live in is bigger than they are.

Unlike most Americans, I have lived in non-white, not-English-speaking countries. I've also lived in Alaska in the late 1960s where the BIA (I'm not a fan) was the majority of the government.

In writing my fiction, I borrow liberally from my experiences in these other places. They were mostly not fun though they were extremely educational, and they made me an outsider for most of my life – which it's useful to be if you want to be a writer of fiction that lives off the beaten track.

So.

My favorite main character of all the main characters I've written is black. Her name is Cadence Drake. I'm WELL aware that there are lots of folks who dislike the fact that I – a whitish American woman (more of a brown-rice beige, actually) of unknown but decidedly mixed ethnic heritage – have the temerity to write science fiction novels in the first person as a black female.

Brief interlude while I answer the one person who just asked, *If you don't know what your ethnic heritage is, how do you know it's mixed?*

I know because my irises are a splotchy mix of blue, yellow, reddish brown, and dark brown, and the hair on my head contains straight blonde hair, curly red hair, wavy brown hair, straight thick black hair, and thin, fragile, kinky

black hair. And now, a fair amount of gray. I'm betting that my relatively recent ancestors represent every broad racial group on the planet.

Back to the objections for me writing a black main character.

Never mind that she kicks ass. Never mind that she's the perfect person for the series and the overall story, never mind that she represents what I value in human beings and what I value in the world I live in.

I'm not black. So how dare I?

And the answer to that of course is that I dare because like all my fictional characters, Cadence Drake is me when I am being someone else. She shows an essential aspect of the universe I want to live in, the one where color of skin is irrelevant, where gender preferences are all acceptable, where humanity has conquered the stars and its prejudices equally...

But where the problems of power and its inevitable corruption of those who seek it still exist, and where people have found new ways to manipulate that power over each other.

Cady lets me tell my story better than any other character I could have created. Her existence as my main character shows what matters in her universe, and also what doesn't.

So to my question:

If you're a writer, what boundaries have you crossed in the pursuit of your fiction?

What boundaries are you afraid to cross? And why?

This is only a question for other writers.

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The Forward Motion Writers' Community

written by Holly
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I created and for about half a dozen years I ran a free online writers community called Forward Motion. I don't anymore, but Forward Motion is huge, growing, still free, and still wonderful. It's now owned and run by my friend Lazette Gifford. Check it out.

- Main Community Discussion Board
- Community Directory
- What Is Forward Motion?
- Why I Wholeheartedly Recommend the Community
- And Why I'm No Longer There

It is entirely possible to become a writer completely on your own. A lot of writers go this route. It can be slow, it can be damned hard, it can be lonely. You can end up making the same mistakes over and over because the lack of feedback makes it tough to figure out what you're doing right, and what you're doing wrong. But it can be done.

It's equally possible to find out everything you need to know from reading books, or taking classes led by professional writers, or attending a select few workshops led by professional writers. This route can be expensive. And no matter what classes you take, or what degrees you get, results are no more guaranteed than if you did it yourself.

You can also join a writers' group. Or a community. I've done both, and as long as you get a good group or community, I

recommend either one.

Forward Motion is a good community where full-time professional writers, complete beginners, and everyone in between, gather to discuss the ins and outs of publishing in a friendly, helpful fashion. But they don't just talk. They also do. Writing your first novel and sending it off is a sort of rite of passage there; I cannot count the number of "someday I'm going to do this" writers who became "have written and submitted first novel, working on second one now" writers while I was there. And the numbers just keep growing.

People there treat each other well. There are few flamewars, and those are short-lived. Flames get the flammers kicked out. Writing is the core around which every other discussion circles. It's a very focused place, though an awful lot of fun, too. If you have something you need to know, you can spend a couple of weeks looking your answer up in books, or God only knows how long taking classes or attending workshops until you find your answer, or you can go to the main FM board and just ask. Usually within an hour or two, and sometimes within a couple of minutes, you'll have a handful of useful answers from people who have already done what you want to do.

The community operates on the Pay Forward principle, which is that, in exchange for the help you get there, you then go out and help others. The members are some truly wonderful people. The place is fun. It's inspiring. People there **accomplish** things. They write books, submit them, sell them.

And it's FREE. Completely free. Just remember to pay forward.

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Writers' Block: Losing (and Regaining) Writer's Hunger

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At the heart and soul of writing is the desire to write. And your relationship with writing, like all other relationships, can atrophy from the day-to-day wear of disappointment, from lack of support, from lack of feedback, from lack of incentive, from just plain exhaustion, and from a thousand other things. It can be as tough to maintain love in a long-time marriage to writing as it is to keep the love alive in any other relationship. Maybe that sounds improbable (after all, how can writing be both your job and your romance?) but it's true.

And the really silly thing is that the same things that will keep your personal relationships alive will keep your writing alive, too. If too much drudgery and lack of attention have left you and your writing not on speaking terms, here are some strategies for putting the hunger and the passion back in your romance.

▪ **Make dates**

While it probably wouldn't make a lot of sense to take your writing out to dinner or to a movie, it makes perfect sense to make dates with a local writers' group, or with a friend who writes. Give yourself one night every two weeks, or one afternoon a month, where you can give yourself over to the luxury of talking about writing with other people who are equally smitten by this passion of yours. Use these dates as an opportunity to 'get dressed up'—that is, to prepare some writing to take along and show around.

If you don't have a local writers' group and would really like to start one, you can find out how some friends of mine and I put together a writers' group that made all of us better writers and got some of us published by clicking on the Schrodinger's Petshop Members' Handbook_

▪ **Bring home flowers**

Well, not really. Bring home books instead. Books about writing, books you wish you had written, books about subjects that interest you but that you know nothing or next to nothing about ... surround yourself with words that inspire you, words that entice you, words that tempt you, words that make your heart beat faster.

Personally, (and I know this sounds about as sexy as unwrapping a mummy), non-fiction books about archeology, anthropology, and ancient cultures and civilizations really float my boat. I get goosebumps just looking at them in bookstores—tomes with titles like **Renaissance Diplomacy**, **Ancient Inventions**, **The Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins**, **Life in a Medieval Village** ... I renew my romance with the writer in me by reading them, and throwing myself into those long-lost times and places, touching those foreign soils, hearing those forgotten tongues. And when I can feel them in my marrow and in my breath, I find that I'm usually full of excitement about writing again.

▪ **Listen to what your love is saying**

You've been plugging along on the same novel for five years, doing a chapter a year more or less, writing and rewriting the first five pages, and frankly you're bored stiff with the people who inhabit the book. They lost your attention a long time ago, and have failed to do anything interesting enough in the last couple of years to get it back. But you don't want to be one of those writers who has twenty three-chapter novels stuck in a box under your bed (which is admirable of you,

incidentally) so you grit your teeth and refrain from killing of those bores, and swear that you're going to get to the end of this novel or die.

Well, you just might. Die, that is. Don't let a book kill your writing. Sometimes you have to figure out what it is that you love, and what it is that is keeping you from what you love. You love the writing. Your *passion* is for the act of sitting down and putting words on paper, telling stories, weaving webs.

You do not love the individual book (and, believe me, when you're entangled in the middle of one, I know this is a tough distinction to make). The book is going to be gone from your life sooner or later, and another book will take its place. And another, and another. They will leave you, they won't call, they won't visit. Only the writing will remain, but nurtured, the writing will sustain you, and will grow stronger and more beautiful with the passing of time. Just like your other loved ones.

Kill that five chapter book that's been eating your heart out, and sit down and do a timed writing about the story that's waiting to be born in you right now. About who you want to meet on the page. About the city or the land in which you want your new, wonderful tale to travel. Or (and I know this sounds weird, but it works) do a timed writing in which you ask your writing where it wants to go, and let it tell you in the first person.

▪ **Wrap yourself in Saran Wrap**

I couldn't resist the image. Sorry. But it is, in a goofy way, applicable. Do something with your writing that you wouldn't normally do, or wouldn't do in public. If you would never consider writing poetry, then write ten poems. If the very idea of erotica makes your ears turn pink and your palms sweat, write the raciest scene your mind can conjure up. If

you only write literary fiction, break out and write the climactic scene from a murder mystery or a romance novel. If murder is already your thing, write a pastoral medieval literary scene.

What you're doing here is, a) having fun by doing something you don't have to expect yourself to be good at, and b) stomping hell out of your internal censor, who will be so shocked by your rebellion that it will shut up for a while and let you write what you want to write. If it starts to nag again while you're making progress, telling you you're no good and that you don't know what you're doing, you can always threaten it with more erotica or sonnets to your refrigerator.

▪ **Go someplace special together**

If you write science fiction or fantasy (or to a lesser degree, mysteries) you already have a ready-made special place where you and your writing can go. The SF/F field is loaded with wonderful conventions. Find ones where more panels are dedicated to writers and books than to role-playing gamers and media fandom—you want to be inspired, and you'll get the most inspiration by meeting the writers, editors, publishers and agents who bring out the sorts of books you want to be doing. The mystery field has, from what I've heard, far fewer conventions, but a much higher percentage that feature writing.

If you aren't writing in either of those two specialties, you can still look into writers conferences put on by state and regional writers' associations. I've served as faculty at one of these, and have attended one other, and I've decided they aren't for me, but they're evidently the thing for a whole lot of other folks.

And don't forget taking along a notebook and pen when you go places you've never been before, (no matter why you're there), to record images that surprise and tantalize you.

▪ Remember anniversaries

Keep track of the dates of your successes, no matter how minor they may seem. The day you get up the courage to mail something off for the first time, your first rejection slip, your first personal rejection from an editor, your first acceptance in a non-paying market, your first acceptance in a paying market, your first acceptance in a pro market—all of these count. Put them up in your workspace, and celebrate them as proof that you're working and producing and improving.

▪ Make plans together

Plan to do both great things and small things with your writing. Plan to finish a story for a specific market. Plan to complete the first draft of your new book before you celebrate your next birthday. Plan to research agents and publishers. Plan to enter a contest. Plan to compete for a writing grant or a residence at a writer's colony. Write your plans on index cards, along with the date that you planned them. On a second line, write in the date that you want to accomplish this goal (try to find a happy medium between raging optimism and head-in-the-sand conservatism). Leave a third line blank, and fill in the date that you make each of your plans a reality.

You and your writing were in love once. You can be again. I hope these suggestions help you get there.

Special thanks to Becky Shank, who asked the question that inspired this article.

NOTE: If you've found this article helpful, and if you are currently suffering from writer's block, I built a small class to help people overcome it – frequently in just an hour. If you'd like to take a look, it's [How to Beat Writer's Block](https://hollylisle.com).

Reserved

The Future of the Forward Motion Writers' Community

written by Holly
December 23, 2009
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Note: I created the Forward Motion Writers' Community in its first iteration back in late 1997 or early 1998, and was both its administrator and a very active participant for about five years. That has changed. The following is my letter to the community, posted Nov. 13th, 2003.

There's a scene in **Talyn** where Talyn is offered the choice between a magnificent banquet that represents just about everything in the world, including power and adulation on the one hand, or on the other hand a single canteen of cold water and a sword.

She is a warrior, and the warrior's way is not the banquet, the adulation, and the power. With real regret but also understanding of who she is and what she must do to continue to be who she is, she chooses the cold water and the sword.

I find myself with the same decision. This place is a writer's banquet, and for some years now it has been a home for me – a place to be as well as a place to pay forward. It has been one of the driving forces in my life, sometimes a compelling addiction, sometimes a hideaway from the frustrations of work. I am tremendously pleased with how it has turned out – how much the community as a whole has embraced paying forward, how

very alive this place is. It has brought all of you here, and you are individually and as a group, proof that there are good people on the Internet, and that good people gathered together can do some amazing things.

But on the other hand, there is cold water and a sword.

My heart, my head, and my gut have all been telling me for a couple of years now that I need to get off the Internet. When I write, my mind twitches between the fiction I am writing and the article I could do about the fiction I'm writing, about the useful lesson I have just figured out, about the thing that just happened that I could blog. Every time it twitches, I stall.

I'm not a teacher. I'm not a non-fiction writer. I'm not a blogger. I write novels. They're my sword. And I find that in spending too much time at the banquet, my fighting skills are suffering, my sword is blunted, my focus is scattered.

It's time to take up the sword again, to sling the canteen over my back. It's time to go.

I wanted to tell you all goodbye. To thank you for being a huge part of my life for these last five or so years. I want to encourage you to keep writing, to believe in what you're doing, to pay forward so long as paying forward doesn't damage your work.

I want to reassure you – Zette has proven to be superb at administrating this place, and come the first of the year (unless she wants it sooner) the place will be hers. The community is still growing and it has grown beyond me. It is its own place now – not my place, but Forward Motion. And while the fact that it continues to add members is good, a much more important fact is that its members are working. You're helping each other, you're moving toward publication, setting goals and meeting them, writing stories and books and sending them out. I look at your Pilgrimage pips and your

badges of accomplishment, and remember when some of you came here having never finished anything, and see that you've now finished a novel or several, or short stories, or articles in **Vision** and know you'll be doing more. You're wonderful.

Zette is, too, and though she is not thrilled with this unexpected bump, the community could not be in better or more dedicated hands. Starting now, any donations go directly to her. Please also continue to support **Vision** with your articles – some of you came here because others of you took the time to share what you had learned, and some of you are writing because others of you had just the right piece of inspiration to get each other moving. **Vision** for the last three years has been tangible paying forward, and its current issues and archives are rich and deep because you have made them that way.

Your domain is paid for for the next ten years – I took care of that when I got FM its own site. Because the software licenses are non-transferrable and I haven't yet been able to work out an exception, I'll maintain contact with the software manufacturers for the chat room, the community calendar, and the boards, so you'll stay with current software, and won't have to buy anything new until you're ready.

Please know that leaving is not easy for me. Over the past two or maybe three years, I have come right up to this point numerous times – my heart and my head and my gut don't get together on too much, and when they do I know I should listen. But I didn't want to. I'd talk to Zette, I'd talk to Sheila, I'd try to figure out ways to keep the community going once I was gone, and then I would back off. I wanted to be with you, so I stayed.

But I keep coming back to my dilemma: the banquet, or the water and the sword.

I'm older, the writing is physically more demanding than it

was ten years ago, I have very little work time, I cannot afford the twitches in my mind that take me from story to article to blog entry to website.

It's time I listened to myself. Time I did what I have known for quite some time now that I have to do.

With my love, and my best wishes, and my hopes that someday if I run into you at your booksigning or at a con where you're a guest, you'll tell me "I was at Forward Motion, and I'm doing this full time now," I'll say goodbye.

Be well. Believe in your dreams. Help the next folks coming up the mountain behind you. Thank you for sharing these years with me, and making them wonderful. Thank you for **being** wonderful. Know that I will miss you more than words can convey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly". The letters are cursive and fluid.

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Quoted in PublishersWeekly.Com

written by Holly
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Here's the article.

And here's the full text of the interview I gave:

1) How do you use your website and other online sites (other people's blogs, your publishers' websites, etc.) to encourage people to read your work?

I stick pretty close to home where promoting my work goes – what promotion I do, I do almost exclusively on my own site. However, I have a large, fairly popular site, and over the years, have been adding and tinkering and building things into it. I started writing articles about writing as part of my “pay forward” philosophy; I was the beneficiary of encouragement and advice from some fine pros when I was getting started; these pros had benefitted from the help of pros when they were starting out. The philosophy each passed to the next was that none of us beginners could truly pay back to those who had helped us, but we could pay forward to the next writers coming up. I took that charge seriously, and ever since, have done what I can to pay forward.

For example:

Between 1997 and now, I've written more than 100,000 words of free writing advice which I've posted on my site, accessible to anyone who cares to read it. (<https://hollylisle.com/fm/>).

I also set up a little bulletin board in 1997, and a few people who had met me at conventions and participated in writing workshops I taught at them dropped by and wanted to talk more about writing. Our conversations drew in others, and before long I had a thriving little working writers group. And then a largish working writing community. And then a huge one. I kept everything free, from online classes to discussions to crit groups. When I could, I paid for everything, though at times I had to depend on donations to keep the doors open. Being a full-time writer dependent entirely upon writing income does have its downside. I chose moderators from the most enthusiastic and even-tempered members, we all

volunteered our time, and we learned as much as we taught. I ended up spinning the Forward Motion Writers' Community off into its own site at the point when it had over 2000 members and was taking me roughly forty hours a week to participate in and run (while still writing full time and raising a family); I gave it to a writer friend of mine (Lazette Gifford) in November of 2003, and it currently has over 9000 members, and is still growing. It's also still entirely free (though Zette, too, accepts donations) and is staffed entirely by volunteers, some of whom have been moderating since not long after I took on moderators. It maintains the same "pay forward" philosophy I started it with, and I'm tremendously proud to have had the hand I did in its creation.

Beyond that, I offer free chapters for most of my books, as well as peeks into the creative backgrounding process that gave birth to them, from maps and costume designs to language development and ship design (<https://hollylisle.com/tm/>). I also offer a few free e-books, an expanding selection of e-books for sale, and I discuss life as a full-time writer in my weblog, *Pocket Full of Words* (<https://hollylisle.com/writingdiary2/>) which is open to everyone, and which gets regular traffic from both writers and readers.

2) What do you do that you think is unusual or particularly innovative?

The community was innovative; it was however, as noted above, a full-time job, and I already had two of those.

My weblog is daring, though I don't know if that makes it innovative. I talk honestly about the writing; about how I do it, about what life as a writer is like, about how things go wrong as well as about how they go right. This is no doubt risky from the standpoint of appearances; reports of a glossy stream of unending successes would no doubt make me look like a golden girl, and might be better for sales. But I haven't

done any of the articles or the weblog as a marketing tool; in fact, I never allowed or used advertising in the community, and only recently added ads for a few of my books to the weblog. And I don't flog my books. I discuss them as I'm writing them, sometimes posting snippets of the work in progress, or grumping through stalls, tailspins, and false starts. And I'll do an announcement when a books hits the shelves. Then, though, I move on.

I've written and self-published a couple of writing books, and intend to self-publish more in the current series. The regular reaction I get is "Self-publishing? For a writer with nearly 30 novels out through major publishers?" Yes, for the following reason: I approached my agent with the idea of doing some non-fiction, because I love to write about writing, and while she liked the work I presented her with, she pointed out that non-fiction writing books would not sell as well as my fiction books, but would still count as my most recent numbers for any future sale, either fiction or nonfiction. No writer needs a precipitous drop in numbers. But I wanted to do the writing books. People have been requesting them for years. So. I decided to do them on my own, as a little sideline thing, where the only person who needs to know my numbers is me, and where I can keep them in print as long as I care to. A friend helped me build a web store, Shop.HollyLisle.Com, (<http://shop.hollylisle.com/>), I wrote a second writing book, titled Holly Lisle's Create a Character Clinic, and I put it up, along with an e-book by fellow pro Lynn Viehl (hers is Way of the Cheetah, about her technique for writing prolifically). I'm republishing my out-of-print backlist, adding a little quality fiction by other writers, and I'll be doing more in the Clinic series, with books on worldbuilding, plotting, storyshowing, and revising and submitting work. I'm presenting the books as e-books, but am also working very hard to get the bugs out of offering print copies. With luck, those will start being available in the next month or two.

I do offer an affiliate program for people who are interested in advertising my shop's books (<http://shop.hollylisle.com/idevaffiliate/>) – as far as I know, that's fairly innovative for an author, though it's common enough in other kinds of Internet businesses. The program is very new, and it's quite small so far, but people are making a little money at it (I pay nice percentages on sales) and it does bring new people to the site. So I'd say it's a good deal all the way around.

I'm low-key about selling my work. That's innovative. It might be nuts, but it's innovative.

3) What's your philosophy regarding free downloads of your writing?

I'm much in favor. I have three available at the moment, two novels and my first writing e-book, which was a bestseller at Booklocker.com for quite a while, until I decided to take it down and make it a free give-away.

The novels are Fire in the Mist and Sympathy for the Devil, my first book and another very early novel, respectively, both downloadable from the Baen Free Library, at (<http://www.baen.com/library/hlisle.htm>)

My first writing e-book, Mugging the Muse: Writing Fiction for Love AND Money, is available as a free download with any purchase at Shop.HollyLisle.Com, or at <https://hollylisle.com/downloads.html>

4) Do you think more people find your website from your books or the other way around?

I suspect more readers find my site from my books, and I know more writers find my books from my site. But I don't know whether I have more readers or more writers on the site, and of course the two groups overlap hugely. A lot of people find the site. I know that, and I'm grateful for them, however they get there.

5) What advice would you give to beginning writers who want to promote their work online?

Don't shill your books. Give something of value to Internet readers, make your work accessible and let people know that the same person who has given them something they can use has also written a few books. Then allow them to approach your work in their own time, rather than shoving your work at them. The Internet is, unfortunately, all about shoving advertising in people's faces. If you want to be innovative ... don't do that.

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GUESTBOOK #1

written by Holly
December 23, 2009
By Holly Lisle

Welcome to my guestbook. You are invited to leave comments here. I will read them as I'm able, and respond as I can.

I cannot respond to all posts.

Thank you
Authored by:
TinaK on

Wednesday, January 05 2005 @ 02:40 PM CST

Holly – I just wanted to say thank you for not only your site but for sharing yourself on your blog. Just today I wrote in my own blog that one of the reasons I purchased and read most your books is because I've gotten to "know" you through this

medium. Right now I'm following your workshops through and honest to goodness I'm going to FINISH a novel this year! Thank you for all the hard work you've put into developing them.

And at the risk of sounding like some crazy, demented stalker I have read the great majority of your books and well, I think they are fantastic. Loved Midnight Rain and I can't wait for Talyn!

Thank you

Authored by:

the@phrastus on

Wednesday, March 16 2005 @ 04:43 PM CST

I don't know how you find the time, but I always love to see Silent Bounce posts show up in my RSS reader.

I found this at Seth Godin's blog, and thought you might find it fun. It's a web app that will take an author, make a web service call to Amazon.com and build the author's name using the book cover images it finds. Not very practical, but certainly a fun idea that works well with your name—as well as any author who has as many books in print as you. Amazon returns 49 results for you.

<http://amaztype.tha.jp/US/Books/Author?q=Holly%20Lisle>

Chris Howard

the@phrastus.typepad.com

You are my hero!

Authored by:

paleomodern on

Wednesday, March 30 2005 @ 03:51 AM CST

After finding your "rant" about "the price of a bed" (or something like that was the title) through a link on Jerry Pournelles Blog, I am in awe of you. You wrote what I could not even quite put into thoughts, I have been so angry. You are truly my hero. Hey, are you married?

Kim Owen Smith

paleomodern@sbcglobal.net

"Yes, I'm write!"

You are my hero!

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Wednesday, March 30 2005 @ 12:54 PM CST

After finding your "rant" about "the price of a bed" (or something like that was the title) through a link on Jerry Pournelles Blog, I am in awe of you. You wrote what I could not

even quite put into thoughts, I have been so angry. You are truly

my hero. Hey, are you married?

Thank you for your kind words.

And we're celebrating our tenth year together this year.

]

dis s great! thanks!

Authored by:

haNnah_099 on

Thursday, April 14 2005 @ 01:14 AM CDT

Holly...

you r a very gud writer.. i love ur novels specially the midnight rain.. i have read many of ur novels and i really like them..

thanks 4 inspiring me..

i saw this site wen i was searchin 'how-to-make-a-novel' and as ive expected dis website is really worth visiting!.. im about to finish a novel by next month.. its entitled as extraordinarily ordinary.. du u think its nice?

-

-love_hann_099@yahoo.com-

Thank you

Authored by:

Kathi on

Wednesday, April 20 2005 @ 04:46 AM CDT

I too, would like to thank you for your books. What a great gift to us! You write like I think, I can easily and quickly become immersed in your books.

You are probably smart to have disabled comments- I honestly think there are folks with nothing better to do than troll the web, looking for places to post poison. I wouldn't give them a second thought.

I am a writer as well, though primarily of children's books (just got agented too yeah!!). I have tried my hand at fantasy aimed primarily at women, but no successes there yet - I will hit that head on one day *grin*.

Good luck to you Holly, in everything. I admire you and when people ask me who my favs are, you are in the top five. I wouldn't mind being like you when I grow up.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Anonymous on

Wednesday, January 05 2005 @ 02:41 PM CST

Yes, I was wondering about CaRP. I'm not sure this is the place to put this, but it's the only place I could find to ask a question.

How did you install CaRP? I tried and it never worked properly. I saw you use it for the newsfeed on your home page, so if you wouldn't mind telling me how you installed it, I'd appreciate it.

Synopses

Authored by:

Christina on

Wednesday, January 05 2005 @ 07:24 PM CST

Holly, I would definitely be interested in reading a how-to on

synopses.

I've been keeping up with your blog a lot lately. I really liked where you explained your plan for the new year. I had been wondering about how long it took to write a novel and how to translate the word count. Thanks very much for that info.

It's my resolution to move from game writing into fiction writing this year. I know I'll have a long learning curve, but there's no better time than the present to get started. I'm used to the word counts, but tying a story together is going to be new for me.

Anyway, thanks for the blog and the good reads. I wish you the best in your endeavors this year!

Christina Stiles

Synopses

Authored by:

shay on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 02:29 AM CST

i would love to know how much to include in a synopsis as it's something i find hard to do when sending material off to agents.

also are any of your books available in the uk?

love the site, love the blog

-Sally

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

tsalisbury on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 10:58 AM CST

Holly,

Your site and diary are truly an inspiration.

I enjoyed Midnight Fire and would not have discovered it unless I had discovered your site. I'm looking forward to the release of Last Girl Dancing.

Keep up the hard work. You deserve the recognition you are

receiving and I look forward to one day seeing your books in the top 10 of the bestseller's list.

TS

]

Windows

Authored by:

JenThePen on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 01:15 PM CST

Holly, I'm so glad you started your journal up again. Your window on the life of a working writer is very enlightening and encouraging to me! Thanks for sharing with all of us.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Sam_R on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 01:23 PM CST

I just wanted to thank you for this site. Here, I have learned more about writing from any other source.

This site is also the most noble effort that I have witnessed of an author making herself accessible to her fans.

HAPPY NEW YEAR HOLLY! ☐

Authored by:

Yolanda on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 03:26 PM CST

I just wanted to start with a big THANKS as well.

This blog is very inspirational, just as your articles are. So if you're going to do an article about Synopsis, I can't wait to read it! I've been looking into that quite a bit lately... I've got several first draft books written that I'll be revising this year and looking at submitting (fingers crossed!) so every little bit of synopsis-help helps!

Congrats on the French rights for MR. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and I'm really looking forward to reading LAST GIRL STANDING. I read what you went through to get that out of your system, and EVERYONE should buy that book...

Anyway, I just wanted to leave a little something to let you know that not only is your insight wonderful, articles very helpful BUT your books are terrific!

Have a GREAT day Holly.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

zette on

Thursday, January 06 2005 @ 11:42 PM CST

Hello! (Waves frantically)

Looks like the writing part of life is going pretty well for you. I'm having a dismal start to the year, but I'm sure it will pick up once I thaw my brain back out. It's cold here!

Hope 2005 goes well for you.

Zette

]

please help

Authored by:

ibrowsevan on

Friday, January 07 2005 @ 12:38 AM CST

This could very well be a dumb question, but it confuses me. I have no real idea what unsolicited material is. Or how to have material solicited. If you could tell me exactly what it is I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

-Evan

re: please help

Authored by:

pkurilla on

Friday, January 07 2005 @ 03:30 PM CST

"Unsolicited material" is work that you just send to a publisher or agent out of the blue.

"Solicited material" can be material sent (a) after a

postive response to a query letter, (b) that you talked to the editor or agent about at a convention and they said "sure, send it along", or (c) that the editor or agent calls you up and says "we'd like a proposal on XX".

There are other circumstances, of course, but IMO, these are the most common.

WAVING

Authored by:

pkurilla on

Friday, January 07 2005 @ 03:34 PM CST

Just adding to the chorus of thanks for starting up the weblog again. I missed your old weblog when you stopped (though I understood the reasons completely), and actually have been having a blast re-reading portions of the weblog as I read MR and GoAD. Wow.

Thank you again for sharing so much of your writing life with the rest of us. This aspiring author appreciates it a LOT.

Thank you

Authored by:

joelysue on

Sunday, January 09 2005 @ 09:40 PM CST

Holly, thank you for this wonderful site and the glimpses into your writing life through your journal. I love hearing about your books, the business, what works for you, what doesn't. Your articles are fantastic. I wish you all the best. Looking foward to LGD,

Joely

]

Hello, again

Authored by:

HughSider on

Monday, January 10 2005 @ 11:30 PM CST

Another "good to see you again" post, from a former reader of your previous blog. Thanks for taking the time out to do this.

I thought you'd be amused to know that Midnight Rain is the first romance category novel I've ever bought – dragged in by reading the first three chapters on this site. I enjoyed it a fair amount, I have to say.

Wishing you at least fresh water, and a sharp edge.

Great Site

Authored by:

M. Rivera on

Tuesday, January 11 2005 @ 07:07 AM CST

I've been coming back to this site for sometime now, finding your revision advice quite helpful in the process of my own writing. Just wanted to post and say thank you for this site! I just downloaded Fire in the Mist and am looking forward to reading it. I saw in your biography that you spent time in OH, being from Columbus I was curious to know if you are familiar with any writers' groups here. I've been having a heck of a time finding one. Thanks and keep up the work!

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Michelle on

Tuesday, January 11 2005 @ 10:21 AM CST

Just wanted to chime in and say that I'm so glad you're back in the blogging business, Holly. I discovered your last blog about one week before you put it on hiatus and I proceeded to read all of it. This site has truly become a touchstone for me and reading along with your trials, tribulations, lows & highs, is always helpful, inspirational and motivational.

I'm terribly curious about this pseudonymous novel you're writing. Very mysterious. Personally, I think you should pitch a "how-to-

write" book as

well. If anyone should write one of those, I think you're the gal. Mugging

the Muse is too good to just give away for free. ☐ Not that I'm complaining, of course.

Now I must get back to my procrastination...

Michelle ☐

Answers to the First Sixteen Entries

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Wednesday, January 12 2005 @ 06:30 AM CST

(I know I already know most of you by name, but I'm using your logins as a privacy preservation measure where applicable. So.)

To TinaK, talisbury, JenThePen, SamR, Yolanda, pkurilla, joelysue, and HughSider – I'm glad I can be here. I've discovered that I'm more productive when I do a public writing diary because it forces me to remember that people I know are waiting to read the books I've written. It keeps my readers from being faceless to me. Knowing that you're out there gives me a little extra daily push. Thank you for BEING out there, for stopping by, for reminding me what I'm doing, and for whom.

To The Anonymous CARP Questioner – I didn't do anything special. I followed the instructions they gave for setting the thing up, and it worked. As for how I get my CARP reader to put itself on the front page of my site, I do it as its own separate page, then include it as a Server-Side Include. (If you're not sure how to do that, google for Server-Side Include or SSI. You have to have access to the inner workings of your site, or have a provider who will set up your pages to permit SSI. If you don't, I recommend my host, Jatol.)

To Christina and Shay – The synopsis article is on hold until I have a day or two where I hit my wordcount early rather than late. I'll get to it. But I don't know when. As for books available in the UK, I think so. The SECRET TEXTS trilogy was published there, and I know some of my other work has been distributed there. As to what you might find on the shelves or available on order at the moment, though, I don't know. No one keeps writers up on this information, sadly.

To zette – <waving frantically back> – I thought LAST year was the year. Boy, this year is REALLY the year. <shaking head>

To ibrowsevan – pkurilla has it right. Solicited material is what an editor or agent asks you for, unsolicited material is what you send off in hopes of getting an invite. Books with addresses and guidelines are available. In general and with very few exceptions, the only acceptable unsolicited material these days when trying to sell your novel is the cover-letter-plus-synopsis package.

And to Michelle – the pseudonymous novel is, indeed, mysterious. I will never be able to claim to have written it, and it will never be attached to my website in any way. I will make it a good book, but from the moment it leaves my desk, it will not be mine. Think of this project as the writer version of surrogate parenthood. You only go through that much pain for love or money. In my case, it's money.

And my agent nearly fainted when I suggested doing a writing book. This would, apparently, do such evil things to my numbers that we are going to have to wait until I am Dean Koontz's twin sister before I can do one. I do not recommend that you hold your breath. <g>

Corrigan's Blood

Authored by:

TuPari on

Tuesday, January 18 2005 @ 02:09 AM CST

Will there ever be a sequel to Hunting the Corrigan's Blood?

Hurrah

Authored by:

rook on

Wednesday, January 12 2005 @ 07:51 AM CST

I just want to say "hello" and that I'm excited to see how well everything is going for you now as an author.

Also, it seems that you and Sheila added to the "blog revolution" – if you don't already know, the miscarriage bill has been withdrawn.

<http://home.hamptonroads.com/stories/story.cfm?story=80370&ran=43780>

The jerk who proposed this legislation was surprised at the reponse from the blog community: "They never talked to me prior to going on the Web," he said. "I was absolutely mistreated on this."

Ah gee ... poor guy ... it's **tough** being a legislator, ain't it?

Hurrah

Authored by:

arrvee on

Wednesday, January 12 2005 @ 04:34 PM CST

Apparrently this guy has some odd ideas about what being a "public servant" really means. His email to Maura expressed his astonishment (and dismay) that anyone might have concerns about legislation that he was proposing. He seems to think that the public should not concern themselves with his business and just let him rule the state in any way he sees fit. Does Virginia have a recall law, I wonder?

You did the State of Virginia and possibly the entire country a real favor with that post, Holly.

HAWKSPAR's great, BTW. Now I have another title on my "Damn, I wish I could buy this one right now!" list. Thanks a lot!

□

]

Rec: "Writer's Toolbox"

Authored by:

cmmiller on

Thursday, January 13 2005 @ 06:13 PM CST

Hey Holly,

Just wanted to recommend a great series on writing tools:
http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=76274&sid=2
#series It's geared toward journalists, but I've found it
incredibly helpful in fiction as well, since Clark uses plain
English and much of the same terminology. He updates weekly
and will continue until he hits 50 tools.

Also want to add my thanks for a great site and a great blog.
It's such a help to know I'm not alone in this writing for a
living thing!

Thoughts

Authored by:

ravenflyte on

Thursday, January 13 2005 @ 06:23 PM CST

Great job with the blog. It's nice to read someone else's
insights into what works—and this does serve as an inspiration
for me to find the time to write. Thanks for taking the time
to write all your articles (which are amazingly helpful) and
to keep this blog updated.

[And the included blog plug, because I have no shame:

<http://lraven.blogspot.com/>

In case anybody is interested in reading about a frustrated
high school student attempting to write one monster of a
novel.]

-laurenraven

Hello and Update

Authored by:

firehorse on

Thursday, January 13 2005 @ 08:39 PM CST

Hi Holly,

We traded emails last year and you told me about Forward Motion. Since then I've been trying to finish the second book of my fantasy trilogy, and I'm finally within a breath of having that done and sent off to my agent. Hats off to you and the other authors who manage more than one book a year! I read your blog from time to time just to see how you're doing. Your determination is inspiring to writers at any stage of the game.

I've started a writing-related blog at khurley.blogspot.com. Other than that, I've been eating, sleeping, dreaming the novel I'm working on and struggling to balance all other aspects of life at the same time. It's been interesting, in both the literal and the Chinese sense.

Best of luck with 2005 and with all your new projects.

—

Kathy Hurley

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

WinterWolf on

Sunday, January 16 2005 @ 03:48 PM CST

Holly, I have been reading over your workshops and your tips for writers. I am a beginning writer myself and I found that they hold some very good tips. I happen to have that problem where I have never gotten past 2 chapters for a novel. I have probably about thirty stories unfinished. I find that I'll start one and work on it for a few days and then just stop. The story isn't dead because I have great ideas for where I want them to go but I just..stop. I loose interest in writing temporarily but then when I want to go back and resume the story, it's dead.

I just wanted to say that your workshops are really helpful and that you are an inspiration for me. I hope to one day finish one of my novels.

Thanks, I wish you success on your upcoming works.

applause/production wow

Authored by:

zmc on

Monday, January 17 2005 @ 01:25 PM CST

It is very kind of you to put up all this excellent and free information for new (and not-so-new!) writers to use. As a published writer working on revising her first novel for an editor, I think that everything that Holly says is right on, and with a little fiddling to personalize it, it works for me...and might for most others, too.

I particularly want to applaud you, Holly, for mentioning in your article on a writer's education how useless university-level writing courses can be. I actually have an MFA, so I have some experience in this. All that was taught in my (typical, I think) program was snobbery, particularly about authors who make a living at their writing, whose taste happen to match the common readers' (and, not coincidentally, the tastes of poor and working class readers are considered the most execrable of all), or who write in the genres. You'd think plot and scene and drama were some sign of moral failure, the way they're belittled in these programs. Creative writing programs can turn out bitter critics, but seldom writers. An aspiring writer would learn far more by reading your articles, taking them to heart, and writing every day.

btw, holly, I don't know how you do 3000 words/day, day in and out. I can manage half that for three months or so then need a break of a couple weeks. You're a production goddess!

Thank You

Authored by:

tjosban on

Tuesday, January 25 2005 @ 11:01 AM CST

I just wanted to say thank you for all the things you put in your site. I found it at the beginning of last summer while I was searching for some material on writing, and I must say I am addicted to your writing style and enjoy it very much.

I am currently working on my first novel and have several other ideas waiting in the wings. Your blog is informative and helpful for those looking for insights into a writer's life.

Thank you for all that you have done – Tori

]

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

wanda on

Tuesday, January 25 2005 @ 07:39 PM CST

thank you for midnight rain. i enjoyed the characters tremendously

Thank you: sailing facts

Authored by:

alisons on

Wednesday, January 26 2005 @ 08:39 AM CST

Holly,

a) Thank you for your writing articles and blog – like everyone else, I find them hugely useful. Your articles really helped me get my first novel finished and revised.

b) If you need help checking any sailing facts, my husband has done a great deal of sailing in boats of most sizes (but not square-rigged) in European waters (we're English). I owe you an awful lot for your website, and I'd be happy to pay a little fraction of it back by asking him anything you wanted to know. I don't know how much sailing you've done, but I'd never been on a yacht till I was 25, and I don't think reading alone could have given me the full flavour of what being on a boat is like (especially if you don't particularly want to be there ;))

Best wishes,

Alison in England

Echoes

Authored by:

Denstar on

Saturday, January 29 2005 @ 07:17 PM CST

Thanks. Your website is great. I know where to come when the words won't.

]

NaNo WriMo

Authored by:

Calamity on

Saturday, February 05 2005 @ 01:56 AM CST

Hi Holly,

I was delighted to hear you mention doing your own NaNo writing thing. I discovered that last Nov. and used it to get down the first draft of a timetravel novel that has imprisoned me for 4 years. Oh the joy of turning the tables. At last the story is contained, focused, and I am in control. Have started the process of your One Pass Revision. I may not move along as swiftly as you do but the confidence in knowing I can't become sidetracked if I inject more darkness and venom is so empowering. Besides I'm having too much fun in the Switzerland of 1307AD to come back too soon.

Thanks for the workshops and the encouragement. Without them & NaNo I never would have killed my internal editor and I'd still be stuck on chapter seven.

Calam

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Irysangel on

Saturday, February 05 2005 @ 11:53 AM CST

Hi Holly,

Just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed Midnight Rain immensely, love FM, and am currently reading your Secret Texts Trilogy. You've been an inspiration to many people, myself included!

I also wanted to let you know that I think the cover to Talyn is beautiful, and not what I expected! Amazon.com already has

a scan of it up. Very pretty, and very dark!

Old And New, Plus Praise

Authored by:

emeraldfenix on

Tuesday, February 08 2005 @ 12:47 PM CST

I had just joined FM when you went to seek cold water and a sword, and have recently become a member of this site. I must say that if I had to choose a mentor in the field of writing, it would be you. So many other authors put a price tag on their advice, but everything here is freely given. That, in itself is enough for me to build up my Holly Lisle library.

I like the style, the attitude, of the presentation of the material, too. It says to me, 'You are responsible for your own writing career. Here's what worked for me.'

The bonus of building a HL library is that your books are worth the read. I've read the Secret Texts, Vincalis, Midnight Rain, and the bits in WIPs. Engaging, all of them, but Vincalis is my favorite, though Hawkspar shows a good deal of promise, for me.

Thanks a million. I could only wish to emulate your career.

Old And New, Plus Praise

Authored by:

emeraldfenix on

Thursday, February 17 2005 @ 06:09 PM CST

P.S. I started a generally writing related blog at the beginning of this month if you are ever actually able to get some time for some leisure reading.

<http://emeraldfenix.blogspot.com>

]

A simple thank you.

Authored by:

Emanuil Tomov on

Tuesday, February 08 2005 @ 02:54 PM CST

Dear Mrs.Lisle(or is it Ms.),

I will start by apologizing for my ignorance, but I don't know much about you or your books. I came across your website this early afternoon and I have been reading your advice section for aspiring writers until now, and according to Eastern European time now it is 22:40 P.M.

I would like to say that I have always had the idea of trying my hand at writing hovering around in my head and have been quite fond of anything having some connection to the field of writing, I have always had a vivid imagination, but I have never possessed, until today, the determination to say to myself that I will overcome my indecisiveness and hold on to what now has become an inner desire and aspiration, with whatever tenacity I have inside me and insofar as my limited intelligence allows it.

All of this is because I was touched by your sincerity, impressed with your erudition, and inspired by your great character, which shines through the words you have written here, in this website. I thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Emo from Bulgaria

P.S. I would like to apologize for whatever grammatical and spelling mistakes I have made in this letter.

Hello

Authored by:

candymadigan on

Wednesday, February 09 2005 @ 11:07 AM CST

Hi Holly, you probably don't remember me, but I knew you a billion years ago on GEnie. I was Candy Gresham then. Life being what it is, I have divorced and remarried since. If you remember me and have time, I'd love it if you decided to contact me.

By the way, I've loved everything of yours that I have found over the past (what? 10? 15?) years. I just finished reading the first two books in the World Gate series and ordered the third from Amazon.com just now. They are excellent. I adored Minerva Wakes, and Sympathy for the Devil and recommend them

to my friends all of the time.

As to the rest of you Holly fans... It's nice to meet you.

Steve Manning

Authored by:

shirleykerley on

Saturday, February 12 2005 @ 08:41 AM CST

Thank you for your comments on Steve Manning's offer of the 14 Day book writing thing. I was researching his name (hoping for a miracle with which to get one of my novel's written) when I discovered your analysis of his offer and then your website. I am overwhelmed with the quantity of advice and instruction to writers that you offer from your heart and your life. Thank you so very much for sharing your wisdom. There is a book's worth of guidance there totally free. Your generosity is amazing. (And I WON'T buy Steve Manning's package.)

Shirley Kerley

help with risks

Authored by:

Buggabug on

Tuesday, February 15 2005 @ 05:43 PM CST

firstly id like to thank Mrs/Ms/Miss Holly Lisle for all the help this site has given me, but i have a question: what are some specific risks and requirements involved with becoming a writer?

—

I will soon be published!!! i hope...^^'

Hello, Holly!

Authored by:

MattScudder on

Wednesday, February 16 2005 @ 08:17 AM CST

Thought I'd finally sign your guestbook. Man, you have been busy! Looks like things are really going well for you. Things here are pretty nuts too. School at Columbia is going great!

I'm writing like a mad man.

Anyway, keep up the good work. It's nice to swing by here and see how you're doing.

Rob (a.k.a. MattScudder)

Hello, Holly!

Authored by:

MattScudder on

Wednesday, February 16 2005 @ 08:19 AM CST

P.S. I have a new weblog if you ever have time to check it out.

<http://whenboredomstrikes.blogspot.com>

]

Thank you

Authored by:

marcus0001 on

Thursday, February 17 2005 @ 09:07 PM CST

I just wanted to say thank you for the list of ideas to keep in mind when starting a novel. I know you get this a lot, but I thought I should at least thank you. I finally I might be able to get past the first twenty pages without getting bored or stuck. Thank you.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

billybumbler on

Wednesday, February 23 2005 @ 05:30 PM CST

Try this link for Geeklog trackback:

http://lucas.is-a-geek.net/blog/2003/02/15/trackback_support_f_or_geeklog

Air Force Linguistics any your son

Authored by:

candymadigan on

Wednesday, February 23 2005 @ 07:06 PM CST

Might as well be intel. Cross your fingers and hope that's what he gets.

I spent the last 5 years of my AF career in "the building". I

was personnel, but I needed a badge to get to my desk. If he goes into linguistics, he'll spend time in "the building" too.

Geeklog/MEPS

Authored by:

Jenne on

Thursday, February 24 2005 @ 08:58 AM CST

Hi! I was here while you were at my site! Thanks for the heads-up about the permalinks. I'll keep digging for pings and trackbacks. Hopefully, they'll be on the version two, if it ever gets released. (I haven't messed with my templates because I'm holding out for version two.)

Congratulations to your son. MEPS is so exciting. My best friend took the linguistics test and thought she failed, but she passed and was chosen to be an Arabic linguist. She also signed up for six years. My son is two years or so away from possibly making the same decision— I wasn't scared when I joined, but I'll be nervous if he joins. Now I understand why my dad was nervous.

Dvorak

Authored by:

matt on

Thursday, February 24 2005 @ 11:59 AM CST

Holly,

I just wanted to let you know that you are the person who convinced me to switch over to DVORAK. I made the switch about 4 years ago, when I was beginning to feel some twinges I thought might be the beginning of carpal tunnel. I don't know how I managed to stick with it for the first 2-3 weeks, especially since I was working as a technical writer at the time and had to write at a computer most of the day. But I did stick with it and now it's a breeze. I also switched to a trackball mouse, which helped.

I've never met anyone else who types on a Dvorak keyboard, and everyone thinks I'm strange when they hear about it. The odd

thing about this: I can't type when I look at the keyboard (since my keyboard still has the QWERTY letters—I have to share a computer at home and at work). I can only type looking at the screen. My fingers remember where to go, but my brain can't. I can type the old way only if I look at the keyboard.

Anyway, I just wanted say, thanks. I don't know how many of us are out there, but I thought you might want to hear from one of your "converts."

Best,
Matt Hartman

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Michelle on

Friday, February 25 2005 @ 10:53 AM CST

Loving the new look to the blog, Holly. It's so calming...zen like. It's like a holiday for my eyes. ☐

The worst you can say is no (I hope...)

Authored by:

workingtitle on

Saturday, February 26 2005 @ 05:41 PM CST

So- about the psuedonym projects...

as a forever fan (I remember when your website was just called "forward motion" and it was almost all blue ☐ I don't suppose you could tell me what those projects are, could you? I'd buy'em, even in a genre I hate (which pretty much means "even if it's a cowboy story" because I like everything else...) just because it's you.

Pretty, pretty please? With Dove chocolate on top? ;op

And I loved the community and ghetto rant- preach, sister, preach!

The worst you can say is no (I hope...)

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Saturday, February 26 2005 @ 07:56 PM CST

Honestly cannot tell you that I am the person writing the book I am writing that I am not officially writing. Cannot. Nor drop hint, nor anything. It's contractual, and I have no howling desire to be in breach of contract, which would cost me money I can't afford.

Love the new blog look

Authored by:

TinaK on

Sunday, February 27 2005 @ 08:45 AM CST

Holly,

I love the new look of the blog. As someone else commented – it's very zen like and soft on the eyes. Pleasure to look at.

Tina

Thanks!

Authored by:

arainsb123 on

Sunday, February 27 2005 @ 01:00 PM CST

Just writing to thank you for all the writing info on your site!

–

Anders Bruce

<http://www.andersbruce.com>

Homepage of a teen writer

]

Love the new blog look

Authored by:

tjosban on

Sunday, February 27 2005 @ 03:52 PM CST

I also enjoy the new look. The colors are beautiful and soothing to me. Eases my soul.

Also wanted to put this out there for whoever might be interested. I started a blog, partly because I felt it might

keep more accountable for my writing and partly from Holly inspiring me to. If you have people looking to see what you did every day, that's some motivation there, baby! Yeah! (It's Sunday, lol.)

<http://www.TJWriter.blogspot.com>

—

Live. Learn. Love.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Jenne on

Tuesday, March 01 2005 @ 01:51 PM CST

Your new cover is beautiful and eyecatching.

I agree with you about the Web site design— although PBW makes some good points as well. When I get to that point, a good friend of mine will do the design part, but then I'll take over. We've been friends for years, and I wouldn't consider anyone but her doing the design. (She's a very good Web designer whose aesthetic is a lot like mine.)

I would like to thank you

Authored by:

mikeink on

Tuesday, March 01 2005 @ 06:02 PM CST

I would like to thank you for sharing your experiences about how difficult it is to write. I just turned 29 and my goal is to write my first fiction book. I have done some short stories before and find writing a novel is a big undertaking.

I am afraid of rejection even though I haven't even done the first page yet. I would like to thank you for putting some of my fears at rest..I know now my goal is I should focus on the book.

I am very lucky in that I can now focus on writing over the spring and summer..so I hope to put my book out by end of summer time..

Thanks again for your helpful resources!

Regards

Michael.

]

Bubble Plotting

Authored by:

TinaK on

Tuesday, March 15 2005 @ 06:28 PM CST

Hi Holly,

You've mentioned the name of the plotting software you use before – I know it involves bubbles that you can move around. Can't seem to find it on your site anywhere. What's the name of it again?

Thanks,

Tina

Bubble Plotting

Authored by:

pkurilla on

Monday, March 21 2005 @ 11:23 AM CST

It's called "Inspiration" and a quick google will take you to the website. I've used the trial version, and I like it a lot—now to find the money to buy the full version...

]

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Jason on

Thursday, March 17 2005 @ 03:08 AM CST

Holly,

I found your website very informative, I have finished 2 novels so far and submitted one. I was in the clouds when it came to getting an agent but you've helped me and a few other writers I know start looking in the right direction. I have quite a few pieces I'm working on but my problem is that when I get about 30 pages into one I get this other great idea for

a story and start it. You've inspired me to set a goal and deadline to finish my third novel before my 21st birthday in 3 months.

Thanks again
Jason

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Nalencer on

Friday, March 18 2005 @ 02:53 PM CST

I was just wondering, Holly, what mapping program you use. You made reference to it on your Korre Maps page, and someone told me you mentioned it in your diary, but I've looked here and in the old blogs to no avail. As a fellow Mac user, I'm sure you can appreciate the difficulty of finding a good program for the Mac, so if it's not too much trouble, what program do you use for mapping?

]

I'm Glad You Have A Guestbook Again

Authored by:

csmaccath on

Wednesday, March 23 2005 @ 10:03 AM CST

Holly, I found your site sometime early last year while I was surfing the web for info on some aspect of the writing craft (can't remember now what it was). I've been thinking about writing a real, paper-type thank-you letter to you for a while now, but you mentioned that you were crazy busy last year, and I didn't think my letter was important enough to interrupt a hell-bent-for-leather dash to the end of a manuscript =).

Anyway, I wanted to tell you that your web site has been a source of encouragement for me. I read "Mugging the Muse" and your article on depression in writers shortly after I finished a master's program that shredded my self-esteem, and your straightforwardness was like a shot of penicillin.

I haven't actually read any of your fiction (yet), but I surf out to your site often to check things out. Best of luck to you and to yours, and thanks for being such a straight arrow.

CSMM

P.S. If you're interested in another bit of validation for the experts, professionals, and college opinion, there's a link on my web site to an essay I wrote about my eewy experience in grad school. Here it is:

<http://www.csmaccath.com/pagesabout/teachingcruelty.htm>

Way to Go!

Authored by:

kaplooeymom on

Tuesday, March 29 2005 @ 09:02 AM CST

I personally agree with your rant that is not about 'that case', however, I'm wondering how you got all that email, since you've not published your address on the site (at least I couldn't find it).

And to let you know I ordered the combat conditioning based on your experience. I'm an exercise/allergery/stress induced asthmatic, so if simple strength exercises can give results even half of what you got, I'm gonna give it a try.

Later,

Leah

E-mail

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Tuesday, March 29 2005 @ 09:32 AM CST

I'm wondering how you got all that email, since you've not published your address on the site (at least I couldn't find it).

1. I've mentioned in a couple of other posts how people with accounts in the weblog could reach me. Whether these folks with weblog accounts remembered reading those posts, or whether they're just very persistent link-clickers, I don't know.

2. My SECRET TEXTS books have an e-mail address in the back.
3. Some folks hang on to my address when I e-mail them about something they've written, either here or elsewhere.
4. Some of the comments come from regulars, colleagues, and friends who have had my address for years.

In most cases, I don't know which of these methods were used. Maybe all of them. Even so, I didn't get hundreds of letters, or even dozens (which I would have if I weren't so parsimonious with my e-mail address.) I got enough to cover all the basic positions on the issue, in some cases with duplication, except for the Christian far right. And I'm guessing not too many of those folks read the weblog of an avowed non-Christian disliker of all religions.

Awesome Blog!

Authored by:

Alan on

Saturday, April 02 2005 @ 12:44 PM CST

I love reading your weblog. It's awesome, and you're such an amazing writer.

I, especially, love that you added a new feature. The Mind/Body thing. It's probably 'cause I'm one of those teenagers that are always self-conscious(sp) and everything. In any case, I hope everything goes well with your exercise routine.

-Alan

—

Life is as fun as you make it.

First Time Reader

Authored by:

Holly1956 on

Monday, April 04 2005 @ 10:38 PM CDT

Hi Holly,

I just finished your book *Midnight Rain*. And I'm hooked! I was looking for something new and different to read and your book caught my eye on the rack. I must admit having the same first name helped. BUT after the first few pages of the book I realized that I had found another author to add to my short favorite writers list. And I'm looking forward to reading more of your books in the near future.

—

HollyA

I'm A Fan

Authored by:

Jo Eden on

Tuesday, April 05 2005 @ 06:22 PM CDT

Dear Holly,

I've been a fan of yours for some time now, ever since I read a quote of yours in a writing forum. We were discussing characters, and someone offered up this line from your *How-To on characters*:

"All paintings are done from the same basic set of colors, and all characters are built from the same basic set of responses and emotions.

How you use these elements — how you mix them and apply them — determines whether you'll end up with a masterpiece or something not even your grandma would hang on her wall."

I thought to myself, I have to read more from this woman. So I came to your website, studied all your workshops and articles, and started searching for your books in print. I don't have them all yet, but I have

quite a few (at least fifteen). I want to tell you about the ones I've read and what I liked about them, so if anyone reading this message has not read these books, please beware of **spoilers**.

So, the first of your books that I read was *Sympathy for the Devil*. At first I was only going to read the first few chapters to see if I liked it, since you have the book up on your site. But then I couldn't stop, and went several hours without eating so I could finish. I was really interested in its vision of God and heaven and hell. It reminded me of a great movie – *Defending Your Life*. That's one I think you might like. Anyway, I have since bought the book, because I want to support you and what you do, and because I think your work is valuable.

Fire in the Mist was the next book I read. I adored Medwind Song and was fascinated by her barbarian culture. She spurred me to buy the other two Arhel novels (which I've only skimmed so far, but are high on my list of books to read), and the anthology that has a short story about her nine husbands (which I did read and found delightful).

After that I read *Glenraven*. I really liked Sophie and the way she developed. My favorite scene was when she defended the camp while JayJay was wounded. That and the one where the villain (I forget her name at the moment) forces her henchman to gouge out his

own

eyes. That certainly stayed with me long after I finished the book.

It took me a while to find it, but I managed to buy a copy of *Hunting*

the Corrigan's Blood. All I can say, it was absolutely worth it. I cried

and cried over Badger's death! And the poem, "Life, Well Lived, Will

Weep," is a beautiful and inspiring thing to behold. I have it taped to my

wall. I hope someday you can resell the book and maybe even write a

sequel.

The last few books of yours that I've read were the *Secret Texts* trilogy and the prequel, *Vincalis the Agitator*. The infanticide

scene blew me away – I don't think I've ever been so affected by

something I've read, and I'm glad to have been; it filled me with awe. I

was also amazed at the vivid world you created, both pre-war and post-

war. You have such good ideas!

This message has become ridiculously long, and really should be mailed

as a letter, but I wanted you to see it as soon as possible, because I

wanted to tell you how much I enjoy reading your books, and articles,

and diary. You are a truly fascinating woman, and though I don't always

agree with your views, I think your opinions have merit and I always

consider what you have to say. I applaud you for speaking your

mind,
and refusing to pretend you don't have feelings about certain
issues in
order to avoid conflict with others.

I wish you the best in all your future endeavors. Your Fan,
Johanna

]

Your opinions and why we read them...

Authored by:

ishtar_nl on

Wednesday, April 06 2005 @ 06:40 AM CDT

Hi Holly

I hope I have found the right place to leave some comments for
you. I

read your entry about your opinions and the responses you
sometimes

get for sharing them. I'm sorry that often the negative
responses

outweigh the positive. I thoroughly enjoy reading your blog
precisely

because you are "opinionated"... There are occasions when I find
myself

nodding in agreement to something you say, and others where I
can't

quite agree with you.

What is interesting though, and what keeps me coming back, is
that

often I am forced to re-examine my own beliefs based on
something

you have said. In the end, isn't that what it's all about? You
are

reaching a wide audience and there is no way we can all think
alike. For

example, I am a Zimbabwean, now living in the U.K., having
arrived

here by way of South Africa and the Netherlands. What are the chances that my life experience is the same as yours? Yet I still find there is enough common ground to relate to what you are saying, and to try to understand the issues which affect you and which you write about. I think the people who get so angry and upset when someone dares to

express an opinion very different to their own are just basically fearful people. I'd hate to generalise too much, but I'd say that lashing out is the reflex when someone comes along who challenges them to think – or worse still, challenges them to listen. In the end, this kind of reaction says more about those respondents than it does about you. Probably all you have done is to shake the foundations of their belief system a little.

(Boy, is that scary! Can't have too much of that going on!!) I would hate to think that you would consider – even for a moment – not speaking your mind. We are living in difficult times and there are far too many

people on this planet already, who can't or won't think for themselves, and who can't or won't speak up for what they know is right. I respect you for writing about the things you care about. And on those occasions when I beg to differ, I respect your right to hold your own

opinion. I'm
sure there are many other people reading your blog who feel
the same
way. I apologise for not letting you know sooner, and hope
that you feel
encouraged to just keep on doing what you are doing. It's
working for
me ☐
ishtar_nl

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Anonymous on

Wednesday, April 06 2005 @ 02:20 PM CDT

Rock on, Holly! Love your stories, love your books, and love
your sharp, analytical, critical thinking skills!

I want to hear

Authored by:

ahdie on

Monday, April 11 2005 @ 09:39 AM CDT

I wanted to share this with you. My daughter, who is a senior
in high school wrote this. She didn't send it to the
principal, but I thought you and your readers would appreciate
it.

“I don't want to hear from the Valedictorian that she
truly believes we are one family. I don't want to hear about
her high school endeavors.

“I want to hear from the kid whose name no one knows “ the
one who sits in the back of English class, wishing he could
disappear.

“I don't want to hear how hard it was to keep a 99%
average.

“I want to hear from the girl who struggled to get on Merit
roll.

“I want to hear from the 'freaks' and the 'losers' “ not
the football kings and the cheerleading queens.

“I want to hear from those who struggled.

“I want to hear from those like me.☐

—

Mary

]

whoop, dere it goes

Authored by:

Monica on

Tuesday, April 12 2005 @ 01:27 PM CDT

Lemme see how this guestbook works. . .

Just wanted to give you a high five for getting that proposal out the door and cross my fingers with your for good news soon!

Paving the cost...

Authored by:

Typosaurus_Rxe on

Wednesday, April 13 2005 @ 10:35 PM CDT

3.5 acres is roughly 500 tons of cement.

At \$80/ton that comes to \$40,000 to pave the lawn.

A small price to pay for eliminating yardwork...

Charles Baucum

back online again.

A friend from the past

Authored by:

Kat Starke on

Sunday, April 17 2005 @ 07:00 PM CDT

My apologies for not really following form here. I'm mainly posting to reopen contact with an old friend. It's been a couple of years, has it not? To show it's really me, do the kids still have the cloaks we made them? I'm now in NH, from the Puget Sound area.

Give a shout & we can catch up.

Kat

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

geo on

Thursday, April 21 2005 @ 06:53 PM CDT

Holly, you're coming to Minnesota next year! Guess where we live now? Yes, Deb finally strong-armed. . .uhh, convinced me of the advantages. Pencil us in for a lunch/dinner/whatever on us.

Best. Geo Rule (who once died for the cause)

Sorry to hear about the proposal

Authored by:

klharrds on

Friday, April 22 2005 @ 10:58 AM CDT

Keep plugging away, we're all rooting for ya.

GUESTBOOK #1Just got here

Authored by:

Howard Ladd on

Monday, April 25 2005 @ 08:49 PM CDT

I like your books and have enjoyed lurking and reading the guest book. I find it interesting that we share the same birth place . Transplanted Yankee now in South Carolina

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

JKimble on

Saturday, April 30 2005 @ 07:26 PM CDT

Holly, you are no doubt the #1 source for emerging writers! I thank you for all your hard work on the site.

I would like to obtain permission to use one article per month in my own newsletter for writers. I will give you full credit, of course, and put a link to your site.

Thank You~

Jillanne Kimble

The Emerging Times Ezine for Writers

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

MattR on

Monday, May 02 2005 @ 02:50 AM CDT

Hello Holly! You have a wonderful site, and I just stumbled upon it! It's

great that you have so many tips and info about writing, but I wonder

if you could help me with a writing-ish question...

Just as an intro, my name is Matt Rudes, I'm 18, a freshman at

UCLA, and severely disabled in many ways (except my noggin is A-OK,

except when I hit it with a hammer, then things get fuzzy, or when I

hit it with a mallet, which is a slightly different experience than the

hammer...I won't even go into the crowbar, piano, safe, refrigerator

(!), or washing machine scenarios...). If I am not in my bed, I am in

my wheelchair, going to school, at school, or coming home, and that's

about the extent of my life (that's not meant negatively, just a

statement of fact...). Anyway, when I finish my undergrad I want to

go to Law School to become a lawyer, but I have always wanted to be

an epic-fantasy fiction author. I even wrote a really, really, really bad

novel in fifth grade, but like one of your articles said, I made three

copies and burned each of them, page by page! (Turns out it's not a

good idea to burn your novels in a forest filled with forty-foot fir trees

dying from thirst from a five-year drought...especially when

you are
in a wheelchair, which doesn't get good
traction on leaves, and there's no way to escape the
approaching
flames...)...

As you can see, my sense of humor is sort of Gallow's humor-y,
ironic, satirical, etc. Anyway, my question is this: I want to
be a
writer, I want to write an epic fantasy series that spans
three, four,
ten books. But I know that I don't have the skills or
experience
required to do so. I keep asking myself, "How do successful
authors
get successful? How do the Tokiens of the world sit down, plan
out a
three, four, ten book series, create their worlds, etc etc." I
have no

problem creating a world, drawing a map, really just planning
a novel.

I could stay in the planning stage of a novel forever...the
problem
comes when I go to write the first page, first chapter, and by
the third
I've scraped everything as really bad and stupid...

Nevertheless, back to the "How does one become a successful
author?" Besides PRACTICE, lots of writing, the usual answers
that

one author might tell another (which I understand and agree
with), I
would like to know how you developed and honed your writing
skills.

Was it purely by writing over and over? Did you take any
classes?

Should I change my major from Psychology to English/Creative Writing? Will taking English classes increase my skills as a writer? Do I

need to read books about writing? Take classes or workshops?

I've reached a conclusion after thinking about all this, but I am not

sure if it is right, wrong, etc. My conclusion, after thinking about this,

is that I need a mentor / teacher, an experienced writer who knows

what it is like and is willing to help and guide me. There was a movie

with Sean Connery, I don't know its name, but he played a reclusive curmudgeon who helped an African American teen from the

'ghetto' get into a fancy academy, and in the end the writer who

wrote one book 40 years ago and nothing since, and the young kid

who thinks he knows everything, turn out to learn a lot about life

from each other...

So I'm thinking that's what I need...what do you think? Do you think I should just shut up, stop bothering writers who want to focus

on their own work, and just start writing? Or, if a mentor is a good

idea, who should I turn to? An English professor at school? I guess

the person doesn't have to be near me, they could be across the

country, or the world, with technology the way it is...but there are so

many writing associations that I don't know where to turn. There are

also a MILLION how-to books on writing, and I'm afraid they're all

copycats who have no clue how to write epic fantasy but are good at selling an idea to another businessman...

ARGH! It frustrates me so! I dream of a future in which my job is as District Attorney for California, but my secondary job or side-passion is moonlighting as an epic fantasy author, who (and this is just pure 'fantasy') revolutionizes the genre of epic fantasy...such lofty goals, especially for someone who is 6'5"+ but only towers a mighty 4' in

my wheelchair...Ah, my chair with wheels, my wheeled chair, round and round I go in my circuitous way, destined to break out of this circle and ride in a zig-zag, but waiting for destiny to throw a kink in my tires to start me on that road....

Well, this entire entry is probably not what this posting site/page is all about, but I thought I would just throw my question out there, to see if you, or anyone, had any thoughts on the matter...I would love to have you/someone point me in the right direction, so as to avoid

wandering aimlessly south when I should be going northwest...I guess I should get a better compass and stop hitting myself in the

head with
washing machines...

Any help or advice would be GREATLY appreciated!!

Thank you for reading,
Sincerely,

Matt Rudes

(I thought about putting my email in here, but then I saw at the bottom the "your email will NOT be displayed" part, and I had second thoughts...My guess is that you could find out the email of the poster, but I'm not familiar with web-blogs and chatrooms and stuff, so I don't know...I guess I will just keep checking up on this 'thread' to see if there are any responses...)

p.s.

If you feel intrigued, or perhaps just a little bored at the moment, just head to www.google.com and type in "Mathew Rudes" , and you can read a little about who I am, the tragic curse / beautiful gift that is Marfans Syndrome, and in general the life of Mathew Rudes...

p.s.s.

Best of luck to you on your writing career, and anyone else reading this!!! ☐

p.s.s.s.

I will be frank and admit that I have not read any of your books...but
after all the great advice I have gotten from this site, I think I will pay
a trip to Amazon and pick up a copy of one of your books!^^

p.s.s.s.s.

I do apologize if I should have put this post in another subject area, or
in a different way...like I said, I'm not too experienced with chatrooms....

To MattR
Authored by:
hollylisle on
Monday, May 02 2005 @ 07:05 AM CDT
Long question, short answer.

I wrote. A lot. I sent stuff out, I got more than a hundred rejections before I made my first (tiny) sale, I got considerably more rejections after that. I still get them – witness the Onyx Proposal thread in this diary as a current example of that.

I took one Writer's Digest short fiction course – I was fortunate to have a good instructor, but what I learned from him I've written about extensively on the site. I spent a couple of weeks staying with Mercedes Lackey – I wrote a couple of chapters of Fire in the Mist while I was there, and a handful of wry sonnets, and learned how to work as a professional (hit your deadlines, write every day, treat people kindly.) What I needed to know to **write**, though, I learned from being alive for all these years, and from paying attention to that.

No, you don't need a mentor. Or classes. Or workshops. Or books. You can use them if you like, but they're unnecessary

extras.

Yes, you do need to start writing, and write every day. Consider a million bad words your investment in getting the first good words. Ray Bradbury figured that as the break point for quality writing, and he's more right than not.

Along with that, read. Everything. Fiction, non-fiction, genres you love, genres you hate. You will learn more from reading good books and bad books and horrible books than you can ever hope to learn from any teacher. At least if you pay attention.

Also read:

- Experts, Professionals, and College
- Who WON'T Make It In Writing, And How Not to Be THAT Writer
- Are YOU Right for Writing?

Define "successful." If you consider eating every day and paying your bills on time every month necessary for success, you might want to stick with law.

]

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

Delilah on

Tuesday, May 03 2005 @ 12:23 PM CDT

Hello,

I am one of those people that peruse websites, never leave any comments, bookmark the website and hardly ever remember to return to the website. I honestly don't think this will happen this time.

Your website has encouraged and inspired me in so many ways you will never know.

I have never written any thing completely however I have many of ideas for stories floating through my grey matter just waiting to be put down on paper.

The one article "Do You Need a College Education to be a Writer" was what drove me to post here.

See I homeschool my seven year old and I am a strong advocate for self-learning.

Thank you for that well written and inspiring article. I have posted your website on my home-school's board for others to read.

Bravo Holly!

Homeschooling

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Tuesday, May 03 2005 @ 12:41 PM CDT

Hi, Delilah,

We homeschool, too. I think that both children and adults learn

best when they own their own educations and are responsible for

what they learn.

I understand that not everyone can homeschool, and that even some of those who can shouldn't. But for us it has been the ideal

solution. I wish I'd heard of homeschooling when my two older

children were little; I'm proud that my youngest has been homeschooled from birth.

Holly

Bigger Pics of German Cover Art

Authored by:

Jo Eden on

Tuesday, May 03 2005 @ 07:35 PM CDT

Holly, you can get bigger pictures of the World Gates German covers through amazon.de

Here are the links:

<http://images-eu.amazon.com/images/P/344224126X.03.LZZZZZZZ.jpg>

<http://images-eu.amazon.com/images/P/3442241278.03.LZZZZZZZ.jpg>

They look great! I love German art.

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

MattR on

Thursday, May 05 2005 @ 02:24 AM CDT

Hello again,

Thank you for answering, I appreciate that. I know my question was

long, and the gene for succinctness was another one I missed out

on...anyway, I'd like to ask a few follow up questions/comments, and

see how you/anyone may feel:

-I read the three posted links you had posted, about who wants to,

and who should be, an author. I want to be an author because I like

writing. It is fun. When I write, I am literally flying, walking, using a

sword, fighting, having a life other than being stuck in my bed all day

long. Why live in reality when there is a whole other universe waiting

to be created, where anything I want can happen, where the impossible is possible, where ducks go moo, etc etc etc. I have no

notions of becoming rich by being an author, and never really thought

it would be my full time job. But there's no reason why I

can't be a

lawyer and write 10 pages a day or something like that...So that's

why I want to be an author

-I agree, I should have defined what I meant from "successful" author. Money is NOT why I want to be an author. By "successful," I

mean that I can have the story I have always dreamed of, put in a

book, and made available to the general public, so that they may read

it and enjoy it. "Successful" would be becoming skilled enough so as

to plan, write, sell, and publish a multi-book, complicated, twist-and

turn epic fantasy novel, a la Lord of the Rings.

-(as a side note, I can understand where your opinions about college

may come from...and I don't know you, so I'm not judging you...but have you gone to a general college, or maybe attended a class, or

something? (I don't know, it's an actual question)...to me, school is

my life, as I have no other chance of being a productive member of

society than having an education. I will not resign myself to a career

of drooling all day long, waiting for my aorta to explode and for the

bliss of death to sweep over me...I want to get as many experiences

of the world as I can, and as I cannot start a garden, make a window frame, do karate, ballet, any of a number of things which I

love and that interest me, but at least I can learn about them

in
school...just as a personal thought, yes, today's education
system is
WAY too concentrated on standardized testing, and SATs, and
all that

worthless stuff, and we don't have enough really good teachers
who
actually want to teach...but high school / college is probably
what you
make it...it may push you into a semi-type of mold of a 'regular
person of society,' but there's no reason you HAVE to become
that
person...anyway, that was a tangent, making this even longer
than I
had planned, so I apologize again...

-I do not think that every word I write is straight from God's
mouth...quite the opposite really, in that I feel, hate to say
it,
insecure when I write, because I am not sure of how well it
really is.

Writing a lot will most likely fix that...but that brings me to
my real
question...

-...being a college student, having health problems, being in
pain 24/
7, and a complete lack of a social life, leaves me with little
daily time.

If I were to dedicate 'x' amount of hours a day to
writing/planning, I
would want to know that they were well spent...Since you are
writing/
have written a series of books in which the plot continues
from one
book to the next, how do you physically arrange all the
reference

materials, charts, graphs, timelines, notepads, do you have a system

or something? Is it all done in the computer? If I want to create a

HUGE world, with rich history and characters and culture, how in the

world do I do it in a fashion that will be readable when I go to put it all

together? Any tips? (It's basically a question of planning a novel, but

more on the terms of planning 3-5 novels

-ok, lastly, just two questions:

a) Admittedly, I do not like the tiny detailed aspects of grammar. I

really don't. It's not that I think that that is for an editor or

proofreader, I just would rather fix that sort of stuff when I revise a

novel. Passive and Active voice is still a little confusing, and I do need

to prune my grammar abilities. What would be the best source to do

that? Or is just writing the answer?

b) Stressing the importance of reading is something I've seen and

heard a lot. Problem is, there is a FLOOD of fantasy stuff out there...I've heard several radio reports and articles about the genre

being flooded with bad eggs...so let me put it this way: If I was a

student you were home schooling, which fantasy books would you assign that would show the best in: -storytelling, story line, characters, creation of a world, plot twists and turns,

dialogue,
"Showing not telling," and general examples of jaw-dropping,
overall
beautiful writing. What about like classic books, like, I
don't know,
Shakespeare or Charles Dickens or T.S. Elliot or something
like
that...is there like a list of 'great books to read' on the
internet, or
general books that will help to make a 'well-rounded author?'

Ok, well, I think I've taken up enough of this Guestbook...thank
you
again for at least responding, which means a lot. I really
appreciate
authors taking time to talk to those seeking advice. I just
hope I'm
not one of those "sitting in the front row, jeering and
sneering, hands
constantly raised, "Me me me!", cornering you after a
convention"
kind of people...I've never been to a book signing, convention,
or

whatnot, but I can imagine what it would be like!...writing and
maintaining this web site shows what a great author you are,
and
what a kind and generous person you are too.

Thanks again for all the help.
Much obliged.

MattR

]

Reinventing yourself
Authored by:
ahdie on

Friday, May 06 2005 @ 01:48 PM CDT

I've been thinking a lot about your comment of May 1st in your Journal. What is stopping you from writing the novel first, and then having Robin sell it? Why are you depriving yourself of the utter joy of writing as a discovery process? I say – go for it! What have you got to lose?

You're an inspiration to all of us,

Mary

–

Mary

Being Sick

Authored by:

kriti on

Sunday, May 08 2005 @ 06:02 AM CDT

I haven't been up with your blog recently.

So I was surprised and sorry to read today that your Onyx proposal was in dire straits and that you're sick too.

I'd guess that the two are linked. Once you get the nasty germy bugs out of your system, I hope you'll find the bugs stalling your writing career have also dissipated.

–

“Books are where things are explained to you. Life is where things aren't”-Julian Barnes

Hi

Authored by:

Carlie on

Wednesday, May 11 2005 @ 06:42 AM CDT

I'm glad you are feeling better ☺ But I don't know how you do it... How do you get up so damn early? Why do most writers seem to get up so early? If I was up at that time, I wouldn't be able to write. All I would be able to do is complain about how I was awake. ☺

Looking forward to you bloggin again. That and Talyn ☺

–

xoxo Carlie

<http://carlie-michelle.com>

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

BeMused on

Wednesday, May 11 2005 @ 08:47 PM CDT

Greetings!

I just finished reading your book "Midnight Rain" and I wanted you to know it was fantastic. I review books for Tanzey Cutter (use to be at TheBestReviews.com and now on FreshFiction.com) I love to read, and I am in the process of taking time to see about writing.

However, the purpose for telling you this is that when you read a lot of books, many are worth the read, but still don't stand out. So it is rarely that I am so surprised to be really entertained by a book. Your writing captured me from the get go and kept me on its emotional, curiosity grabbing ride. I have that echo one feels of contentment and sadness. Contentment because it was an excellent read and moved me. Sadness because it's like I've sort of watched a new friend become old. Your characters are fresh and real (some of them scarily so ☹ ROFL) and to have my emotions run around freely is a joy. Not to mention my daughter looking at me as I said "hey you stupid fools..." once outloud...ROFL

Thank you for something great. I intend to look up your other books now. May the Muse Be With You Always! and WHoot! (I whoot a lot spontaneously...bad habit...)

Anne Barringer

A little miracle...

Authored by:

ahdie on

Tuesday, May 17 2005 @ 11:08 AM CDT

How wonderful to hear you might have found a way for more

peace! Fill us in on your secret as soon as you can. It might help all of us!

Mary

–

Mary

]

FM problem

Authored by:

ahdie on

Friday, May 20 2005 @ 11:06 AM CDT

Hi Holly – I was reading your lesson on Outline Planning in FM. The following link didn't work. I'd hoped to see your sample outline!

URL I was trying to reach: broken link

Error 404 – Wrong Page

linked from here=

66.67.129.82

/pdf/secrettextsoutline.pdf

www.hollylisle.com

Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:1.7.8)

Gecko/20050511 Firefox/1.0.4 StumbleUpon/1.9993 (ax)

404

Mary

–

Mary

c

Authored by:

danbloom on

Saturday, May 21 2005 @ 01:07 AM CDT

<http://nevertoolatetobegin.blogspot.com>

holly

I was trying to send this site to you. might help.

danny

It's really never too late to begin again!

Secret Texts Outline

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Saturday, May 21 2005 @ 10:55 AM CDT

Not sure what happened, but the .pdf file of the SECRET TEXTS proposal that sold is back in place. The series was originally titled MIRROR OF THE DEAD, and the final books are **significantly** different than the story in the outline. Nevertheless, for writers who want to see how I pitched the series, the proposal is now available again.

You can also pick up the .pdf of the first two chapters of DOW, submitted with the proposal. Again, these are different in significant ways from the final version of the books.

Hope you find these useful.

Secret Texts Outline

Authored by:

ahdie on

Saturday, May 21 2005 @ 11:22 AM CDT

Absolutely! Thanks.

Mary

—

Mary

WFH 1

Authored by:

ahdie on

Saturday, May 28 2005 @ 11:14 AM CDT

What kind of book has an afterword, study guide, glossary, and bibliography? Certainly not fiction.

Just call me curious.

—

Mary

WFH 1

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Saturday, May 28 2005 @ 01:27 PM CDT

Fiction. But I honestly cannot say any more than that.

Last Girl Dancing

Authored by:

Lucy on

Tuesday, June 07 2005 @ 09:56 PM CDT

Hi Holly,

I need a big favour from you—can you send me the back cover blurb for Last Girl Dancing please? I would like to include it in our store's July catalogue but I can't find the full blurb anywhere.

BTW, Midnight Rain was absolutely wonderful and our readers here are eagerly awaiting your new book.

Lucy

—

Ever After- The Romance Book Specialists

Shop 2, 262 Crown St

Wollongong NSW 2500

Australia

]

FireFly TV Show

Authored by:

DeathShade on

Thursday, June 09 2005 @ 10:07 AM CDT

I saw on your most recent post a reference to the TV Show FireFly. I didn't know if you had caught this but Joss Whedon is releasing a movie related to (based on) this TV Show

September 30th. It is called Serenity:

[Link to Trailer](#)

Say What You Mean

Authored by:

Kaeroll on

Friday, June 17 2005 @ 09:00 AM CDT

Hi,

I found your site when searching for world-building tips (not actually for writing, as it happens) and I'm in awe of the workshops, articles, and FAQs you've written. You're incredibly talented and if I can I'll be picking up one of your novels in the near future. But the reason I'm posting this is that your "Say What You Mean" article is perhaps the truest essay I've ever read and is brilliant advice for life as well as writing, and should be shown to any person entering a political career.

Question on world-building and taking notes

Authored by:

MattR on

Sunday, June 19 2005 @ 10:45 PM CDT

Hello! It's me again, Matt Rudes. If you, Holly, or anyone really, could

give me some advice on a (short) question, I'd really appreciate it!

=What is the best way to keep/write notes when worldbuilding or

novel planning? In a notebook? Should I just write things as they

come, or separate the notebook into different sections, like 'culture,'

'characters,' 'maps,' etc. , or have separate notebooks for each section?

Any type or size of notebook you might recommend? When planning

your novels, do you usually do it on paper, or in the computer? I've

thought of a 3-ring binder, but for me it'd probably be too messy...any suggestions would be greatly appreciated, as I am getting ready to start world building in about four or five days. Hopefully by the end of the summer I can have a world, story, characters, everything in place, before school starts up again. Thanks again!

A Thank You from the slush pile.

Authored by:

KLMiller on

Friday, June 24 2005 @ 07:19 AM CDT

Ms. Lisle,

Like many others out here, aspiring authors who are, deep down in the unspeakables, writers, I have found renewed enthusiasm in your open, pull no punches approach. I have been lost in your articles and advice for two days.

I am a student of the Long Ridge Writers Group and my education continues. The Craft of writing is my new playground and I'm 20,000 words into my first novel (I think you'll like it if you ever get to read it...)

Thank You, deeply, for sharing yourself for the benefit of us new and un-published, but passionate writers.

I have not yet read your books, but I will be going to the bookstore this weekend (rather than purchasing online – per your advice) and making the first of what I suspect will be numerous purchases.

You've given so much to the writing world I hesitate to ask, but, if you could find a spare moment between tasks, could you just wish me luck, even if it is just to yourself?

Thank you and I look forward with great anticipation to soon

being immersed in your worlds, as I continue to build and live within my own.

KLMiller

My very best wish for luck

Authored by:

hollylisle on

Friday, June 24 2005 @ 09:31 AM CDT

Absolutely, I'll wish you luck. And cheer for your success. And hope that you'll let me know not only when you sell something, but when it's out on the shelves where I can pick up a copy.

And I'll remind you that the harder you work and the more you put yourself into your work, and the more you risk falling on your face, the luckier you get. Above all else, persistence triumphs.

My very best wish for luck

Authored by:

KLMiller on

Monday, June 27 2005 @ 04:23 PM CDT

Ms. Lisle,

Again, my thanks. You and every other person I know or have heard of or can imagine will certainly know if any of my work reaches a bookshelf.

I am reading Fire in the Mist. Absorbing. I am an avid R.A. Salvatore fan and have just esteemed you his equal. (My humble opinion)

Have good days by being good to yourself.

Kevin

]

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

cchomer on

Sunday, June 26 2005 @ 06:08 PM CDT

I wanted to say thank you for putting up your suggestions on writing. Hadn't been at it for a while and now the pages of characterization, world creation, ideas, etc are flowing as fast as I can write them.

I saw your name and it looked familiar, but it didn't hit me til I saw the names of your books that I had read much of your older work.

You have really given some of us deviant, stuck writers no excuses for not writing. Thanks!

—

Life isn't about finding yourself, life is about creating yourself.

AnySoldier.Com

Authored by:

workingtitle on

Monday, July 04 2005 @ 01:10 PM CDT

Hey-

This is probably something you know about, but I just stumbled on it and thought immediately of this site. AnySoldier.Com gives contact information of soldiers in the field. You can send stuff to them with the line ATTN:Any Soldier attached. Then those soldiers will pass stuff around to guys who get little or no mail.

The site also has info on what you can/can't/should or shouldn't send.

Great resource for people who want to show support but aren't sure how...

<http://anysoldier.com/>

When I was in junior high, Gulf War 1 was happening. I didn't really understand the politics of it, or the reasons, but I had an understanding of what war meant. One of my teachers

hooked us up with an any soldier address and I sent a couple letters over. It was a good feeling for me and, hopefully, a bit of comfort for him. Regardless of how you feel about the war, those folks are in hell and need all the help they can get. A great thing, I think, for kids to do.

Anyway, passing it along.

Jess

]

Inspired

Authored by:

Rowan on

Monday, July 04 2005 @ 08:30 PM CDT

Hi Holly,

I came upon your site merely looking for updates on my favourite authors (of which you definitely qualify). What I found blew me entirely away! I think in reading your posts, and your guidelines for writers, it stirred the beast deep within me and I have now started my own fantasy work. Between Mugging the Muse (my 'right-hand reference') and FM, I have been inspired to accomplish this dream, though I know the road will be grim. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for the kick in the arse to reawaken that spirit within me to follow this dream.

I do not pray, generally, as I share your views on religion, but I send you as much positive thought as I have. Both on your proposals, reinventing yourself, and anything else you choose.

Thank you,

Rowan

PS: I read chapter 1 of Hawkspar...um...please hurry! ☐ It was goooooood.

—

Do or do not, there is no try

-Yoda, Ep. V

Re: storm

Authored by:

ahdie on

Friday, July 08 2005 @ 02:02 PM CDT

Well – if you turn into Dorothy, don't forget to follow that yellow brick road. Seriously, you & your home will be in my prayers.

–

Mary

]

GUESTBOOK #1

Authored by:

mizsavannah24 on

Sunday, July 10 2005 @ 09:21 PM CDT

Holly, first I wanted to say thank you for all the incredible information you have presented for hopeful future writers! Second, I picked up Midnight Rain at B&N today and I'm taking a short break to write and say it is fantastic! I'm only on page 125 and I'm a little bit freaked out! :o) Even though I have to leave for work by 6 am, I'm not going to bed until this one is done. Thank you for this wonderful page turner! All my best ~~ Shelly

Whoa.

Authored by:

Miri Graci on

Monday, July 11 2005 @ 01:12 PM CDT

Can I bow to you and worship your feet? Please?

This may be slightly off-topic front what others have said, but since it's a guestbook...I just wanted to say, in all ways, thanks so much. (I read through the entire contents of this site over the course of two or three days...talk about enlightening.) All of your essays and workshops and how-to articles are some of the most helpful stuff I've ever read.

I'm currently also in that pesky middle stage...argh. At least I know what my ending will be. Sortof. My characters are remarkably strong willed...{sweatdrop} This is the farthest I've ever gotten in a novel, though I still have time for my original goal...kinda. Getting published by fifteen is running farther away even as I feel like I'm getting closer. Know the feeling?

Best wishes in all the rest of your writing escapades,
Miri

Re: Freakin' Amazon

Authored by:

lemm on

Monday, July 18 2005 @ 08:29 AM CDT

Hey, don't forget – 0 out of 5 people have found that particular review helpful. ☐

Thank you for helping me realize my love of writing...

Authored by:

Writative on

Saturday, July 23 2005 @ 05:16 AM CDT

I don't know how to say it simpler.

I did not even know what it was that I was writing before I found FM. I just sat down one day and started making up stuff until I had a substantial amount of stuff with no direction.

15,000 words into it I realized that I must be interested in writing, because I had not intended to write anything. I only wrote when I wanted to and had no goals or system and still the text kept growing. That was my first novel.

With the courage and guidance I have found through the FM community and in Holly's advice I have now completed my second novel and I am about to start rewrites. And I started and finished this one on purpose.

Thank you Holly, for touching spark to the fuel. I hope to be

able to pay forward someday too.

—

FM (Forward Motion) name is 'Writative' also.

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Yippeeeee!!! Good News on Ohio 5 & Writing Site Updates!

written by Holly
December 23, 2009
By Holly Lisle

I had a blast this morning. Lost track of time, (and as a result got twice as many words as the last few writing days)...

And I got a kick-ass start to Chapter Two. My MC is in trouble, her entire town is in trouble, and in MY tomorrow but her next three seconds, she is going to get some awful news.

Which I am really looking forward to writing.

But, with 506 words for the day, 3,122 words for the book, and a nice, solid start to Chapter 2, I must now go work on the website.

I'm working on the emails that will bring groups of HWC members back to the site after we replace the school with the new software. I also have some "techie for other folks, but I have to set it up" stuff to do today.

So, having had a whole lotta fun with the words, I now go to do spiffy “new school awesomeness” website stuff.

Get Holly’s Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates, and when these books go on sale, *get invited to the launch.*

FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly’s Thursday Writing Tips

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Ohio 4: Friends, cannibals, and 4,475 words (of 1250 planned, plus how THAT happened)... and 15,118 total...

written by Holly
December 23, 2009
By Holly Lisle

I wrote about 700 actual words today.

Following which, I benefitted by having vastly overwritten a big chunk of Ohio 3, in which I leapt ahead and did a ton of stuff that actually needed to wait until this book.

When I realized, back in Book 3, that I’d gotten ahead of myself, I set those words aside (counting their loss from Book 3 when I did so)... and today, got to add ONE piece of that word count back in.

I'm not sure that I'll be able keep them all – but today, I had fun with money.

With the concept of money, and the concept of trade, and with people who understand TRADE versus those who understand MONEY, and the very nasty complications that can occur when these two incompatible groups of people collide.

And I'll get to have some more fun with that tomorrow... and will probably end up a few words down rather than a few words up in the process, because the gigantic scene I'd pulled out of Book 3 is 4860 words long, and I'm positive that I got wordy.

But for today, I'm done, and moving on to other things on my list.



Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



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