

Bumped my Book 4 first-draft deadline back to Nov. 15

By Holly Lisle

Numbers are a funny thing. They're utterly irrelevant to the process of getting a good book, but they do act as an incentive to get your ass in the chair each morning and write.

However, toward the end of a project, it's easy for small numbers to be too easily disrupted by a couple days where you missed a deadline, and then the pressure to 'catch up' – even to an utterly arbitrary deadline you set yourself that has no Real-World Relevance whatsoever, starts nagging at you. Repeated days of seeing that you missed what the software thinks is your "should have hit" number, larger than your REAL number, starts to wear.

My daily objective is 1250 words. And, as a nice example, today I got 1255 words. But because I had a couple days last week where other things had to take priority, and because I'm very close to my actual deadline, a couple of "nearly hit the count" days (and one day when I couldn't work on the novel at all) translated in an exceedingly large daily "catch-up" word count as figured by the software.

So, just so that I can count my words (I need to see my daily number) and so that I won't see a blue "failed to hit your objective" bar at the bottom instead of a green 'success' bar, I bumped my 'deadline' back to mid-November.

I'll finish before then, because the 1250 number is what I'm actually working towards.

Anyway, however...

Today was a really good Monday. I hit my objective, and I came

up with a lovely unexpected conflict that includes things happening that *I KNOW* are terrible for my MC – but this is stuff that will look totally benign to readers.

It's really fun to put things like that into the story, to know that the instant the reader realizes the truth, there's going to be this moment of shock at what's being going on right in plain sight.

So...

1255 words for the day that I had a lot of fun with... and 56,286 total on the book. And I'll still probably have this first draft done in October. I just don't feel like having the software pressuring me to do more than my objective.

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Today got sideswiped by inescapable NOT-writing work.

By Holly Lisle

No words.

No joy.

But Monday is another day.

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In the Ohio series, geography begat magic... one of those little inspirations that's really paying off

By Holly Lisle

I'm writing the Ohio novels in a highly fictionalized version of the town in which I live. I loved this place for a huge chunk of my life even though I spend most of my life away from it.

One of the things I did was to copy off a map of the place... and then start doodling on it.

And the doodles have really paid off over the last week-ish, as some sort of funky features of the town caught my attention. I set a couple of questions floating in the back of my mind:

Why does the river matter?

Why does the ancient flood plain matter?

Why does the SHAPE of the town matter?

Yesterday and today, I found out. Four books in, everything that has been happening since book one suddenly clicked – I had not imagined any of this until the scene and all its implications bounded along the balance beam like Mary Lou Retton – at at the ending, just nailed it.

It was the kind of day you really want to have in your writing... and hitting my wordcount at the same time did not hurt.

I love these books, and this world.

1360 words of 1250 planned for. And 55,031 total.

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Magic system, map, and a good run of words (and where YESTERDAY went)

By Holly Lisle

Not your imagination... Tuesday disappeared down the dark and worrisome tunnel of "something about my mailing lists isn't working."

Yesterday I spent all day first figuring out why I had so many folks who weren't getting emails they wanted... and then the rest of the day building the process by which they can get them.

And can be on the right lists to be invited to things they'll be able to use or have fun with... like new classes, or new novels.

I feel so sorry for my main character – but happy at the same time

By Holly Lisle

I knew last week that I'd left myself in a good place for this morning – a nice revelation, something terrible suggested in the past.

And as I read last week's words before starting into today's, everything clicked.

I've been writing since just before 7 AM, and the words flew. I got 1487 (out of the 1250 I needed to hit my goal), even more than the 1321 I needed to stay on track to finish Ohio 4 on Oct 29th.

I now have 51,832 words total on the book. It's officially a novel. (Anything over 50,000 words counts.)

Things I did not expect happened, but they were the natural outcomes of some really awful stuff in my MC's past. Everything fit, it made sense... but it still surprised (and in one case, shocked) me. When that happens, I have a really good chance to surprise my reader.

So now I'm heading off to do the rest of the things on my list.

But this has already been a great Monday.

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Figured out a spiffy twist... and got carried away: 1797 words, 50,345 total

By Holly Lisle

Today was a “how are they doing it?” day with the novel, as something that has been going on since before Book One even started is revealed.

And for folks who, like me, watched a LOT of Scooby-Doo as kids, I'll note that no rubber suits were involved.

This was bloody, and gory, and truly evil... and when my MC discovered it, it revealed an explanation behind the history of the murder of someone who had been her whole world.

I ran long, because when I discovered this morning what had actually happened (it was a complete surprise to me, too) I just couldn't stop writing.

And it's just the fact that it's Friday and I still have stuff on my list to get done that finally got me to put on the brakes.

AWESOME writing day, with a twist I didn't see coming... and with the set-up now in place for one that I do.

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Going mean and dark in a scene that was tough to write

By Holly Lisle

Folks who have read my fiction know that when it's called for, I have hurt my main characters pretty badly.

Cadence Drake in one of the very early scenes in *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood* comes to mind as a stellar example.

I've been pretty tough with THIS main character, too – but the series of scenes I just wrapped up today went way down into the dark. I'm always careful not to show specifics. I just allude.

But even suggesting what isn't shown can be pretty scary.

However, my character has already come out the other side of it knowing not just what she can do... but what her enemies can't. There is power in this, if she can figure out how to make it work for her. She isn't there yet.

But this isn't book five, either.

I love what I got. But I'm so, so, so very happy that I'm through that rough spot, and that I got to finish with something fun and funny... and will get to write more of that tomorrow.

It was a very good day. 1346 words of 1250 planned, and 48,551 total.

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My MC is having some PTSD and a bit of existential horror today

By Holly Lisle

Discovering what you're capable of under extreme duress will do that to you... and she had the EXTREME duress of being mostly dead for about half an hour.

During which she did some things she can't explain...

And the ICU discovered some things about her that modern medicine, the doc, and the nurses can't explain.

FUN, FUN day today.

Also...

It's amazing how much you can have done by ten AM if you have ass in chair at seven.

I got 1345 words of my planned 1250 (and have also been keeping up with the slightly larger 1300+ Scrivener has been suggesting to help me hit my October 29th deadline).

The deadline isn't hard and fast – it's just in there to keep me focused. But even after I fell behind while having to do a big re-think, re-outline, and some re-writing, I'm pleased to find myself still heading toward hitting the finish date for Book 4.

After which, Book 5.

And the Hell Revision. 450,000-ish words of One-Pass Revision.

But the process is working, and day to day, it's fun.

Day to day, the One-Pass Revision will be fun, too. It's only looking at the whole massive project in its entirety that it becomes daunting, and starts to feel overwhelming, and barely possible.

So... day to day, I just DON'T DO THAT.

Onward. Other work awaits.

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Another fine day in Word-Town – My secondary hero's secret comes out

By Holly Lisle

While my main character is female, my secondary lead is male – and today, for the first time, a big chunk of truth he happened to know about her past came out, along with some grim bits and pieces from his past.

The words flew, and I discovered things I simply had not known until I wrote them and realized they fit, and while I was writing, I managed to answer a handful of critical questions I'd raised for myself through the previous three books.

It was a good day for discovery. And for a very nice word count.

1543 words for the day, and 45,973 total. I have PASSED THE HALFWAY POINT!

Okay... the book will probably run longer than 90,000 words – the other three have.

But I have passed the OFFICIAL halfway point!

And I love this story, this series, and this world.

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Yeah... the streak of **Writer Cruelty (TM)** continues

By Holly Lisle

The words leapt to the page today, my fingers flew, I giggled evilly – and my delightful little town and its bizarre and unpredictable denizens took me deeper into a mess my MC hasn't even fully wrapped her head around yet.

Something big is coming.

Something bad is watching.

And I'm flying toward it through lovely little neighborhoods of fifties Mid-Century Modern homes and sixties bungalows, moving down sidewalks that hold back carefully manicured lawns and 19th Century mansions shaded by centuries-old oaks...

Down to the places in the town that have been around not just for a couple centuries... but for eons.

God, I love this world.

1435 words, and 44,430 total. Really fine day all the way around.

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