

Official Day Off [TM]

written by Holly
September 20, 2002
By Holly Lisle

Today is my official day off. I have nothing of substance to report today except that I am actually taking a day off. The guy came this morning and fixed the air conditioner, so it is not right at 100 degrees in here, and I am well into the first re-read I've done of **Lord of the Rings** in about twelve or thirteen years. Maybe maybe even more. And I'm having a wonderful time.

If you have a day off coming up any time soon, I hope you enjoy it. And I'll see you with work progress again tomorrow.

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Loki just walked into Cat Creek

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I wasn't looking for him, I hadn't planned for him, I sure as hell hadn't plotted him, and I'm not entirely sure what I'm going to do with him now that I've got him, but there he is. Loki – **the** Loki – trickster god of the Aesir, just showed up in Cat Creek, and he's going to help fight the keth. Heyr contacted him, wanting to borrow some weapons. No one expected

Loki to jump in and get involved.

This makes things complicated. I'm going to run with it and see how Loki's presence affects things. If I'm lucky, he'll leave town of his own accord and go back to playing with the Russian nuclear stockpile when he and Heyr and the Sentinels are finished with the keth. But this is one of those moments in a novel when the story gets a bit wild, and you have the feeling that if you don't keep a lid on it, you're going to be running for the rest of the book trying to catch up. And you don't know if that's a good thing, or a bad thing.

Loki. I've always liked Loki – the god of words and how to use them. This could be a lot of fun.

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And Breakout is tonight

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I'm looking forward to talking with the novelists in the Breakout class again. I've been pretty down; getting into stories that are moving well and talking about where other people's books are going will be a pleasant challenge, and something that ought to help kick me out of my own funk.

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I think I found my way back into the story

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I only got about 250 words last night, but in doing so, I took the story in a new direction – bad news for the Sentinels, good news for me. The keth have come to Cat Creek. They've managed to narrow down the origination of new magic in the world to that location, and now they're looking for the source. I've been wanting to do something with the keth since the first book, when Eric unknowingly disguised himself as one in Oria to get into Copper House. The Orians had made concessions to one of these dark gods in order to keep Ballahara intact, and they've had some dealings with that particular one – but the keth are rare. Earth hasn't had a visitation of keth in about two or three thousand years. They like worlds a little less close to the edge of destruction; I'm calling them 'first feeders,' the first line of destruction.

Apparently, something Lauren did is interfering with their destruction further down the line, for they're also not a cooperative lot most times. Keth on Earth is extraordinary, three of them in one place, unheard of.

So today, dark gods and old gods meet in small-town North Carolina, and I'm expecting quite a mess.

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Sliced 1164 words

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The whole Heyr scene went into the trash file – 1164 words that were standing between me and forward motion. And now, finally, I'm getting to sit down to work today. I'm hoping to get my 2000 and find the conflict between Pete and Heyr and maybe Eric, and 'the way we do things' versus the way things need to be done in this terrifying new world they find themselves inhabiting. With Lauren and Jake as the bones of contention, if possible. Have to see how it goes. I've had the day to think about it, but I never really can find my way into the story until my fingers start putting words on the screen. So it'll be a surprise.

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Plodding progress

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I got about 500 words finished before I finally wiped out, sometime around three in the morning. Not a very inspiring pace, and I'm not particularly pleased with what I have. I suspect that when I get the chance to write later today, I'll

find that I have to rip out the entire scene and start over. Hate doing that, but one bad scene can just kill forward progress, and I can't afford a month-long stall.

I'll think about it this morning, try to figure out where I went wrong and how I can put the problem right. That's about all I'm going to get done this morning, though. I'm babysitting, which means any hope of real work is out the window. My little guy is happy, though – he loves having his cousin over to play.

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Too sick to sleep

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One of very few nights when I'm actually feeling too bad to attempt sleep. Since I don't happen to have a headache, though, I'm going to see if I can get my words for the day done – I'm not likely to feel like being up at six in the morning to do them. I'll see if this time I can get a handle on Heyr's scene with the Night Watch and Lauren and Lauren's other protectors. I believe the conflict in this scene needs to be who is going to protect her, and how it's going to be done – something she's going to want to have more say in than anyone is willing to give her. Onward, then. Time to write, and to hope I get to the end of feeling this awful soon.

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Writing, writing ... we're not going to talk about writing

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I have a brutal headache. I feel sick. And I have tiny nephew coming over that I'll be babysitting all day – he's due over here shortly. I'm not getting anything done. I've stared and stared at the manuscript – but some days there simply are no words, and attempts to force them where they are not will result in nothing more useful than making the headache worse.

I don't have too many days like this. But I need to respect the ones I have. I'll feel guilty all day for not having gotten my pages. But sometimes it just isn't going to happen.

I'll probably also be away from the computer for most of the day.

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That went well

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Got my 2000 words plus a smidge – and I love the scene. I got

some good disaster and excellent despair, and a pretty nifty splatter, too. Have to go back in and dig for poignancy in the re-write, though. I came off a little thin there.

Also did the **Fantasy Troubleshooting** class this morning – got two great problems. Making a demon a compelling, deep, rich character, and writing about different peoples through their own eyes. I love good problems.

Incidentally, the transcript link will only work if you're a community member, and logged in. If you need a membership (they're free), this is the link for signing up.

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Finding my way back into the story

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I've had a few days of cooling off – never did get the couple of hours of peace and quiet I needed in order to get pages done yesterday. The day's schedule went from screwed up to totally haywire.

So now I'm looking at the story and where I left it, knowing that two main characters need to be dead by the end of this scene, and trying to get myself into the right mindset to kill them, and do it in the hardest, sharpest way possible. Which two characters? Not telling. Do you know them? If you've read **Memory of Fire**, you know one. You'll get to know the second

very well in **The Wreck of Heaven**. If I've done my job right, you'll like them both. A lot.

I also have to figure out which Sentinel to kill off later in the story – but at least I don't have to do that particular bit of slaughter today. And, having killed faceless millions in M0F, and a only couple of characters – but ones I knew intimately and loved deeply – in TWOH, I'm now looking for a way to wipe out a hundred or so characters I know well enough to take their deaths personally in **Gods Old and Dark**. Which has the unfortunate acronym GOAD.

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