

My next week-ish: Brain reset, but no rest

written by Holly
November 11, 2021
By Holly Lisle

I may not be in here regularly for the next week (I am possibly being a bit optimistic on that week thing, by the way. It might take me two or three to do everything I have to do.)

The first part of what I'm doing is letting Book 4 settle into the back of my brain. I need to figure out Book 5 – and Book 5 needs to bring the first series to a strong ending. The first reason is that I cannot know how well these will do, and if they flop, I don't want the folks who bought all five to be left hanging.

The second is because if they do well, I have stuff in mind for following books, and I'm torn between each one being a complete adventure, and doing a second five-book series.

Gotta get some distance, some perspective – and gotta think about the stuff in the closet. It's a pretty scary closet.

The other thing is, of course, the [HollysWritingClasses.com](https://www.hollyswritingclasses.com) complete rebuild.

The classes – lessons, videos, and downloads – are already built on out out-of-the-way work domain. My moderators did that part.

But the SITE is not built. I hooked it up to the new shopping cart yesterday, and we did test purchases, and the word that comes to mind is... BUTTERY. I don't imagine a lot of people "squeeee" over a new shopping cart.

I squeeeded.

I've owned this software for years – I got it when Dan was building the first version of the HollysWritingClasses.com site. He couldn't come up with a way to integrate it into what he was building, though.

So I just hung onto it – it was, like the stuff I create, a one-time purchase that you can go back to any time.

And when I had to buy all-new classroom software, I made DAMN sure before it bought it that it worked with my existing cart.

And... <SQUEEEE! (yeah, again)> Boy, does it.

Dead simple to set up classes, and my moderators doing test purchases were saying stuff like, "Wow, that was flawless."

FLAWLESS.

We like flawless.

The software comes with built-in affiliate software, so the affiliate program for members will be coming back.

EMAILS.

My database guys got me ALL the membership emails for HollysWritingClasses, going back to the days when there were just the one class: How to Think Sideways.

There were more than 7000.

Obviously, a lot of these are going to be dead emails.

And obviously, not all of the folks who owned the classes will want to come back.

I told folks when I sent out the emails, If you unsubscribe, we'll remove you from the classes. Had a total of 222 unsubscribes when I came in this morning, handed off those

email addresses to my database guys so they could start deleting accounts.

Had 477 so far who will be staying. I'm delighted such a high percentage of folks are staying.

I'll give this a week-ish to sort itself out, re-email only those folks who didn't do anything, and give them one more week.

Then I'll delete all the non-responders from the mailing list, and my moderator/database guys (Tom & James) will remove their classes and delete their accounts.

And we'll move on to the next big obstacle.

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AND DONE... Ohio #4 comes in at 82,359 words.

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And there are places where it's thin. My stuff always puts on muscle in revision.

I love the ending – it answers a BUNCH of questions, and brings in a new role for one of my main characters, and at the

same time, it sets up Book Five.

I'm taking a week off from the words, just to let stuff perk. Maybe a smidge more than that – say until the Monday after next.

During that time, I'll focus on the rebuild of HollysWritingClasses.com, and let Ohio Novel #5 stuff percolate in the back of my mind.

Because stuff happened today that was big, and weird, and really important – and some of that is going to have to be included in the start of the next book.

Anyway – got MORE words than I planned, took longer than I expected to get them.

Totally worth it.

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**6:47 AM – Finishing Ohio 4,
starting Ohio 5, while
building the new
HollysWritingClasses.com site**

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SO...

My website over on HollysWritingClasses.com is undergoing a **massive** overhaul (complete site rebuild).

And I anticipated the process taking FOUR months.

Turns out... it's probably not anything like that.

My amazing community moderators over there have ***already finished building all the classrooms*** in the new software, and getting all the class materials into them – a process I'd expected to take about **two months**. That means that all the lessons, all the downloads, all the videos, all the EVERYTHING... are done.

Except for the lesson timers (the things that make a new lesson show up each week for the writer taking the class), which I have to go in and do manually.

Turns out, that takes about ten seconds a lesson, and all the lessons are (for the person building the class), on the same page, so you can just go through and check a box and put in a number and it takes a couple seconds if you're being careful.

So, timers are a non-issue. I have to do them, but they won't slow anything down. That's what I'm going to do today on all the classes... and I anticipate having all the classes done today... even if I have to duplicate the BIG classes to offer the slower-pace/smaller monthly price one-lesson-every-OTHER-week option.

I'd figured another two months for my two database guys to figure out how to move all the existing members and all their existing classes into the NEW database, while I built the front end – the sales pages for the classes, for us to test the new classroom with the new, beautiful, professional, already integrated shopping cart.

And it very well might take us that long.

But since the software we're using has built-in professional integration with the shopping cart we're using... probably not.

Moving ever single writer who ever bought a class (and who therefore still owns it) into the new database might in fact take two months.

But I'm going to say odds are pretty slim that anything else will.

So I'm saying BEST CASE, we could be on the new software and live on December 8th (one month from now).

I'm saying that the **Reasonable Assumption** is that we'll be moving everyone and everything to the new site (and the new site to HollysWritingClasses.com) around the New Year.

I'm excited. There are a lot of things I'll be able to do on the new software that I cannot do on the old software... but that's a post for another time.

Right now... I'm heading in to write the ending of Ohio 4 novel. Yep. LAST SCENE. And I know what I want to have in it.

Tomorrow, I'll start outlining Ohio 5.

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The words today were long in coming... 1267, and 83,316 total.

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Today I realized that if I had my ending, I could just stop here.

I always end up adding significantly in revision.

But I don't have my ending yet. And when I say that, I mean that I don't KNOW my ending yet.

I have the outline.

But I went a different way with the story, so now the outline of the ending scenes is toast.

I'm finding my way. I like what I found today. I have no idea what I'll find tomorrow.

I'm hoping the path of the story will flow a little faster then. Not smoother. Just faster.

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Wow! WOW! A character gamble and last week's wandering PAID OFF!

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I was LOST.

Gut said to shut up and keep going. And I spent a lot of time today fiddling with the outline, and trying to understand what the stuff I wrote last week meant...

And then, HOLY CRAP!!!

Someone I never expected showed up at my MC's door, and was the person who gave me such a bad time last week, and this week, all of a sudden, I found out what all that *strangeness* and *storm und drang* and wandering was about.

It went CLICK like a well-oiled machine.

Things are going to get deadly again.

But the character who switched teams on me this week is going to make the rest of the week's writing a blast.



1296 words today (and I fixed the damn "working hours" timer in Scrivener early today so that it didn't eat them on me again when it took me a really long time to get them)... and

72,229 total.

And there's a happy dance going on over here, let me tell you.

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Juggling work... and work... and WORK... 70,935 words total

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Holly's Writing Classes is on old software, and I've delayed as long as I can on upgrading it.

Now I'm having to move it to really nice PROFESSIONAL class delivery and teaching software... and even though I have awesome moderators who are helping me do this, there's some stuff ONLY I can do, and even that takes a lot of work and a lot of time.

And I got a bit sidetracked this morning on figuring out how to run the new site.

Meanwhile, I'm writing novel four of five in the OHIO series.

And today – well, I did not *Dorothy Hamill* this particular Monday. I landed on my ass.

I only got about 900 words done on the book, and I don't know the exact number because my damn word counter on Scrivener had my "day" (the hours between which words will count for this day, and when they will roll over to the next day) to 2 PM.

So when I was still working on the book past 2, Scrivener ate the day's count.

And I didn't record what I accomplished Friday in my journal.

Shit happens, but this wasn't that. This was me screwing up. I allowed my attention to be dragged away by the lure of awesome new software.

I know I got ABOUT 900 words.

ABOUT...

That's not the way I want to run my Mondays.

But now I do have other things I absolutely have to get done. So tomorrow, I'm going to pay attention to staying focused on just one task at a time.

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Words went well, bad things happened...

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And once again, I loved what I got.

My poor, poor characters...

And I got 1351 words, and am now at 68,056 – and the villains in town have just done something really interesting, and my MC just got to see the first tip of a brand new iceberg...

But I now have to go work on the massive overhaul of the HollysWritingClasses.com site.

My moderators and I are rebuilding the whole thing (offsite, of course). I'm estimating that it'll take us between two and four months to get the whole thing overhauled.

It will, however, be spiff as hell when it's done.

.....^.....^.....^.....^.....•

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So today I'm sixty-one... RIGHT...

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We had our little pizza and birthday-pie (I'm not a cake fan) celebration last night, because Matt doesn't have today off.

So today, while I AM going to be taking the day off from the novel, I'm working on fixing the HollysWritingClasses.com website.

Doing a big overhaul, upgrading stuff to a new platform and new software, moving ALL the students and class owners...

This isn't going to be done today. The actual work of it isn't even going to be STARTED today. Today, my moderators and I are just figuring out the new software, and trying to find the easiest ways to bring everything over.

And...

I'm kind of thrilled, actually. I love doing this stuff – and I keep seeing how much more smoothly everything is going to work, and how much more fun it's going to be to use.

And I'm still keeping my promise to myself that I would not work on the novel on my birthday.

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Has been hectic... but got the words.

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1264 out of 1250 needed.

Things are mean, and scary, and my MC is in deep trouble. Which isn't nice, but which is in fact pretty much what you want to be going on in the middle of a novel.

I have NO CLUE how she's going to get out of this. None.

When the nature of her problems revealed themselves to me, my gut response was, "Oh, shit..."

And tomorrow, when I come back to this, I'm still going to have that floating there.

Writing-wise, it has been a very good day.

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

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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.

