

My eyes are bleeding, but I'm done

written by Holly

March 28, 2007

By Holly Lisle

No more on taxes. All I have to do with this stuff now is put it in a box and send it to my accountant. I'm so glad to have it finished.

So no more moping from me, and no more listening to moping for you. Tomorrow I start into the new second and third chapters of the GREEN MAGIC proposal. Sometime next week, I'll dive into PLOT CLINIC.

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Taxes, Green Magic, and Plot Clinic

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I forgot—just flat-out forgot—one huge source of receipts: Stuff I bought via the internet, and for which I received internet receipts. All the other stuff is done, but I'm now going through right at 2000 messages in three separate accounts, looking for everything I spent via the web and dragging them all into their own little folder, and printing

them off. Guess what I'll be much more organized with this year?

As for what I'm doing next? I have to spend a few days rewriting chapters two and three of the GREEN MAGIC proposal so I can resubmit it to an editor who loved the first chapter and wants to see more of that throughout the rest of the book.

Then ... Plot Clinic.

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So now that I'm done...

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Okay. The Mac *sending mail* sound has just echoed across the computer, which means the finished **Ruby Key** is on its way to my agent, Robin. I'm pretty wiped out, but very happy with the book. It wrapped at 63,000 words, which was well within my target zone, the new ending worked beautifully, (though I was revising and adding and changing things right up until the last word).

I'm done. It's sort of starting to sink in. I'm done. (Until the revision requests, anyway.)

I have to do income tax stuff next—never fun, and that will take me about three days, I'm guessing.

And then?

Well, the **Create A Plot Clinic**.

Revising chapters two and three on the **Green Magic** proposal, and sending that back.

Hawkspar, when I get the revision requests.

Outlining the sequel to **The Ruby Key**.

A couple of Cadence Drake novellas or novelettes.

C.

The **Sympathy for the Devil** screenplay, which will probably undergo a title change to **The Devil and Dayne Kuttner**.

Lots of things to do. Figuring out priorities and scheduling all of them will be...interesting.

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Plot Clinic Outline

written by Holly

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

























By Holly Lisle

I needed a break from reading my own squished, squiggled, handwriting doing type-in on **The Ruby Key**, so I took about half an hour and outlined the plot clinic. I know this isn't going to make huge amounts of sense in this form. Each outline entry below, though, will have explanations, an example, and an exercise, and in the process we'll go through, I'll create a plot from scratch, and so will you.

I'll deal with each of the three times that you're plotting: before you write, while you're writing, and while you're

revising. And I'll deal with every tool I use while plotting—at least those that I can remember. I've written a lot of books, and I might have tried something back in the early years that I dropped along the way.

Anyway, here's the first draft of the outline:

- ▼  Holly Lisle's Create A Plot Clinic
 -  What Is Plotting (And Why Is It So Hard)?
 -  How to Use This Book
 - ▼  Plotting Before Writing
 -  Plot Tools, and Why There Are So Many
 -  Tool 1: Questions
 -  Tool 2: Character
 -  Tool 3: Theme and Concept
 -  Tool 4: Line-For-Scene, Take One
 -  Tool 5: Crisis
 -  Tool 6: Language
 -  Tool 7: Culture
 -  Tool 8: Maps and Terrains
 - ▼  Tools 9-15: Rummaging the Subconscious
 -  Tool 9: Awake---Word Games
 -  Tool 10: Awake---Drawings
 -  Tool 11: Awake---Timed Writing
 -  Tool 12: Awake---Cards, Books, Newspapers and other Arcana
 -  Tool 13: Awake---Making Things
 -  Tool 14: Asleep---Dream Journal
 -  Tool 15: Asleep---Dream Blackmail
 -  Tool 16: Throwing Stuff Against A Wall---A.K.A. Organic Plotting
 - ▼  Structures
 - ▼  The Three-Act Structure
 -  Act One
 -  Act Two
 -  Act Three
 -  Character Structure
 - ▼  Cliffhanger Structure
 -  Logic
 -  Not Logic
 -  Fusion
 -  Organic Structure
 - ▼  Plotting While Writing
 -  Rethinking Plot Points
 -  The Great (Late) Idea
 -  Changing Characters
 -  Changing the World
 -  Changing the Crisis
 -  Changing the Questions
 -  Fighting with the Subconscious
 - ▼  Plotting While Revising
 -  The Line-For-Scene Plot Check
 -  It's (Almost) Never Too Late
 -  The Great (Late) Idea Revisited
 -  Eureka! or Eek!

Program I'm using to write this is **Scrivener**. It's also the program I'm using to revise **The Ruby Key**. Wrote **The Ruby Key** using WriteItNow. Will review the **Scrivener** software when I'm done with the work. And thanks to Kevin, who created the software, I have one free copy of **Scrivener** to give away.

We'll have a contest or a drawing for that after I've finished revisions and income taxes.

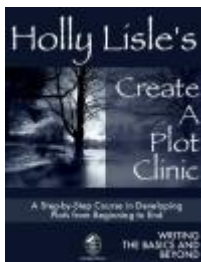
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Cover Art: Plot Clinic

written by Holly

March 28, 2007

By Holly Lisle



Wanted something shadowy and just a little bit sinister—plotting being the arcane, twisty art that it is. This is what I came up with.

Back to work. The words, the words are calling...

And I definitely must revise the **Character Clinic** cover to match the rest of the covers. Soon. Very soon.

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Pages finished

written by Holly

March 28, 2007

By Holly Lisle

I'm on page 63, love what I got, brain is frazzled. So I'm going to take a short break, put together the **Create A Plot** cover, and come back to this when my eyes aren't crossed and see if I can get another set of pages done. The Air Force Kid and his wife are coming for a visit for a couple of days, and it would be nice to have the time off for visiting.

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Revision, the Friday Snippet, and the next Clinic

written by Holly

March 28, 2007

By Holly Lisle

I started ripping **The Ruby Key** apart in my head about an hour after I finished the first draft. I was going to start in on it on Friday, but Friday rolled around and I realized I wasn't quite ready. So I made myself not look at the book until today (actually, I'm printing it out to work on right now, so I still haven't looked at it).

But that didn't stop me from thinking about it. I love the general story and there are parts of what I've written that will undoubtedly go almost unchanged from first draft to

print. But the first draft has problems. Almost all first draft manuscripts do.

I'm not happy with the **depth of any of the characters except for Genna**, the protagonist. Both Yarri and Danrith need to be much more involved.

There are a couple of **scenes that, from memory, feel to me like just running around**. As I read through them over the next few days, I might find that I've put more into them than that, but at the moment I don't think I have.

The first chapter isn't where I need to start the book. I like the chapter and it still feels solid to me, but **the story actually begins back at the house**, just after twilight, with a scratching at the shuttered and barred window of Genna and Dan's house.

I don't think I've used **the blind hounds and the warrior-haunted harp** to best advantage. They can be scarier than they are, and they need to be. I like what I did with the bard, but I don't care much for the wobbly line the silver woman takes.

The audiomaerist, now that I know her deal, needs to have some of that foreshadowed. Or maybe reverted back to what I'd planned for her in the beginning. And I have no clue yet why she and the cat were connected, and I'm not sure if that's a tangled web that needs to be worked out in this story, or held over as an important thread in the next one.

In any case—Friday rolled around and I tried to figure out what to post for the **Friday Snippet**, and discovered that between things I knew I was going to change, and things that I think are going to stay the same but that have massive spoilers in them, I didn't have anything I could comfortably post. And I realized that it's going to take me a good part of March to tear **The Ruby Key** apart line by line and put it back together again the way I can see now that it needs to be. So for me the **Friday Snippet** is going to have to be sidelined

until I start on the next fiction.

Zette, however, had a cool idea about the **Friday Snippet** being a *thing*, in which published and unpublished writers would post a short cut from their current work in progress. She'd maintain the list, and folks could go to her site and go through it, checking to see who'd put up something new. I love the idea, and want to be in on it.

Finally, comments on the **Create A World Clinic**, and the clinic that's actually going to be next. **Create A World**, as I've envisioned it, will require quite a few illustrations, and in PDF form, illustrations increase the file size immensely. My objective has been to keep every book under 2 MG so that everything will be accessible to folks on low-bandwidth connections, and so far, I've kept very close to that. The books don't clog buyers' e-mail boxes, they don't take a lifetime to download on dial-up.

So I have to refigure how to present that particular clinic, or how to get it to low-bandwidth readers. In the meantime, I want to do another clinic. And the **Create A Plot Clinic** looks like the way to go. The other books look like they have good support, but **Plot** came in with a compelling lead, and a few voices of desperation.

So that will be my next project if I don't hear back from Anna Genoese with her **Hawkspar** revision requests before then.

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