Just finished the first draft of The Owner’s Tale — Moon & Sun 3 on deck.

By Holly Lisle

So. Just now the first draft of The Owners Tale, the LAST episode in Tales from the Longview.

Wrote the final thousand-ish words this morning and part of this afternoon, and for now, at least, I like the ending.

I’ve printed off the manuscript (in 12 point Courier, double-spaced and with large margins, of course) where it will sit on my desk for at least one week to cool off.

I like a lot of stuff when it’s still hot that I can see problems with once it’s cooled off.

After it’s cooled for at least a week, I’ll go in, do a read through and a revision, and then hand off to Matt, who will do my content edit. I want to wow him. He already figured out a part of how it will end (he’s just that good).

But he doesn’t yet know why. That is where I want to really bring this home.

This is a story I’ve been working towards for a long time, through a lot of books. This is the story I’ve pulled from dark corners and bad spots in my own life, from the lives of family, from the lives of other people who have not always had things easy. It’s not personal, not any sort of roman à clef.

But through the fiction of the characters, I did manage to hit some things I’ve never been able to work into fiction before.

So here’s the process once I get through the revision.
I hand off to Matt.

Matt points out all the places where I got it wrong, where I missed what I was going for, where I failed to give the characters the proper respect.

I go in and to an editor’s revision.

I ask for a few folks to bug hunt THAT version.

I make corrections from the bug hunt.

I publish the final episode.

And then I start into Moon & Sun 3: The Emerald Sun.

Yep. FINALLY.

I’m not going to rush through writing the final book in the series. In the episode of Alone in a Room with Invisible People that Rebecca and I taped yesterday (Episode 13: Plotting VS. Pantsing, which will go live TOMORROW — Tuesday, Oct. 16th) I talk a little bit about why.

I remembered to mention:

- Currently writing my How to Write a Novel class demo novel, Dead Man’s Party
- While also writing the first draft of the How to Write a Novel class
- Brainstorming and doing the weekly podcast with Rebecca
- Doing the other stuff that has to fit in with these major activities, like spending time with my guys, answering emails, paying bills, talking with folks on the forums, and doing the still-less-frequent-than-I’d-hoped blog posts
But the biggest thing about getting back to the series is this:

I haven’t read the first two books in years, and I have to step back into that world. I’m a visceral writing. I write from inside my characters, doing my best to become them while I’m writing.

So I have reacquaint myself with the nuances of these folks, both good and bad. Walk through the concept map I drew for Book 3. Remember how to step back inside those characters, and become again the girl at the end of childhood who has had the weight of her world land on her shoulders, and who, with a brother she sometimes fights with, friends who aren’t as reliable as one would hope, and a cat who’s lying through his teeth about who he really is, has to save her people from destruction.

If she doesn’t do it, no one will.

I’m hoping to be able to announce the start of the novel around or shortly after Christmas of this year.

I expect that I’ll need about a year to write and revise it. I cannot GUARANTEE that’s what I’ll need, because I’m not just doing one book these days. I’m doing a book, classes, forums, and other things that are possible with the Internet.

Life was simpler in the days of just print publishers and just answering snail mail letters from fans a few times a year.

But cooking on a wood stove and dumping a honey-bucket in the midden downriver from your house were simpler, too. Been there, done that.

Simpler is not always better. Vive la Internet!
AIARWIP Episodes 4, 4.5, and 5: Brainstorming (with worksheets) & more

By Holly Lisle

Because of a certain amount of chaos in my daily life right now, I forgot to mention LAST week’s TWO Alone In A Room With Invisible People podcasts.

In the Brainstorming Workshop, Part 1, Becca and I develop idea pieces from scratch (using the free, no-opt-in downloadable worksheets linked from the podcast page).

In the mini episode, we go over the problem writers face as readers, and what you do if, as a writer, you’re not enjoying reading fiction in your genre anymore.

And in THIS week’s podcast — the Brainstorming Workshop, Part 2, — we take Becca’s raw ideas from the first half of the workshop, and do a second brainstorming session in which she takes the material from the worksheets and turns it into a solid story idea that fits in her world and that she wants to write. (You can download the Brainstorming With A Partner hints and rules for this episode without an opt-in, too.)

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I’m writing *The Owner’s Tale* a little little differently than I usually work.

I generally just do my first draft from beginning to end, but this time, because of the complexity of this story, I worked out the stages in the life of the *Longview’s* owner, and am having the owner tell the story of each stage as one short chapter.

When I get this story told, I’ll go through and add in interstitial chapters for Herog and Cady, Melie and Shay, and show these in counterpoint to the story the owner is telling.

I might possibly add in a couple other folks, too, though I have mostly wrapped up the stories of the other people in this series.

But I now have 5,524 words of what I’m planning as a 30,000 word story, and a got 1021 of those words today.

And I like what I got.

So, on to Lesson 7 of *How to Write Short Stories*, where I’m 2260 word into demonstrating by dissection the process of working huge amounts of time into short stories, and have the stories still hold together. I’m having a lot of fun with this… except for the parts that keep making me cry.
Vipers’ Nest is live

By Holly Lisle

The book went live about a week, week and a half ago. Maybe longer?

I’ve been buried in getting the HollysWritingClasses.com site done, getting the affiliate program live, and it has been wall-to-wall, morning to night work for the last couple weeks.

So while I did remember to publish the story, I missed mentioning my own book launch. Anywhere. To anyone. <beating head on desk>

But this time I went wide, and part of what I’ve been doing was taking as much of the rest of my stuff wide as I could.

So here are the WIDE links (which means you can find these books in a bunch of different stores for the first time).

Longview 1-5 IN ORDER:

Born from Fire: https://books2read.com/born-from-fire
Suzee Delight: https://books2read.com/the-selling-of-suzee-delight
Philosopher Gambit: https://books2read.com/the-philosopher-gambit
Gunslinger Moon: https://books2read.com/gunslinger-moon
NEW! Vipers’ Nest: https://books2read.com/vipers-nest

If your read it and love it, I’d deeply appreciate a review on your bookstore of choice.
Vipers’ Nest bug-hunts: DONE!

By Holly Lisle

What I thought would take one day has instead taken over two weeks and more than six butt-in-chair fully focused hours a day each day of those two weeks.

And I know that I will have introduced some new bugs in fixing the old bugs.

It happens. ALWAYS.

But I have to quit now. HAVE to.

This is as good as I can make the book (and at 38,000 words, it’s just under the low-end cutoff for a novel, so I’m not even uncomfortable in calling it a book instead of a story) in the time I have and with the resources I have.

I now have to move on to How to Write Short Stories lessons and How to Write a Novel class planning.

In a perfect universe, everyone would have infinite time and infinite resources in order to create infinite perfection.

My clock ticks loudly, though.

So I’m going to put the book together in Mobi, ePub, and PDF formats, and put it live on all the places I can. Today.

Like I said, I’m going wide from the very beginning with this stuff from now on. Will post a link as soon as I have one for
Vipers’ Nest Homestretch — I hope...

By Holly Lisle

So... here it is Friday morning, July 6, and I have been working steadily for six hours a day on the bug-hunts for Vipers’ Nest every day but Monday...

Granted, as I’m getting into the bug hunts from my later folks, I’m getting a lot of repeat finds.

But I have not had one bug hunter who hasn’t found at least half a dozen “uniques” — errors no one else spotted. And I’ve had several readers who have asked smart and thoughtful questions that required me to rethink and rework portions of the story.

Result?

The story was about 32,000 words in finished revised “final” draft. Before I touch it this morning, it’s already 38,473 words. If I end up adding a smidge over 1500 more words, the damn thing becomes a novel.

And I still have five bug hunters to go.

I’ve been pulling out words, too, but they’re losing ground to the ones I’m adding.
Why?

Because the writer who gets an intelligent question about something in the story that isn’t answered (because the writer assumed prior knowledge) cannot ignore the question by saying, “Well, to find that out, you have to read the previous stories.”

Because here’s reality.

The reader doesn’t have to read the previous stories. The reader can go read someone else’s stories that don’t assume prior knowledge.

So as lightly as I can, I’m including the tidbits of prior knowledge readers would need to bring in from the previous four stories, WITHOUT tipping off the reader to what happens in those stories.

The fun part of this is that, because of the way I plot, I can put in some things that some characters believe to be true (even though other characters know they are not true) so that I’m not cheating in hiding details while still making sure I don’t spoil the earlier stories for readers who DO go through them out of order.

But it’s slow and careful work, and what I thought I was going to fly through in a day or two is now at the end of my second week of doing just the story ALMOST full time.

And I already know that I’m going to have to go through this when I’m done, read it out loud, and do a final Bug-Hunt bug-hunt to eliminate new errors I’ve introduced.

You’ll be getting a better and richer story out of this. Just not this week.

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The Big Week of Fiction Only includes Getting My Ass Kicked

By Holly Lisle

Vipers’ Nest

Monday morning...

Wild Optimism. Will have Vipers’ Nest done by end of day Tuesday.

Seven hours in, I was only a short way into the new bug-hunter’s sheet I’d started.

Tuesday morning...

Well, I’ll surely at least be finished with this one bug-hunter’s questions by the end of today.

Seven hours later, I’d finished one third of of the SAME bug-hunter’s finds. And that’s working straight through, no food,
coffee and water only, two bathroom breaks.

**Wednesday morning...**

I’m still just one THIRD of the way through the questions I started on Monday from this one particular bug hunter, many of which have resulted in additional detail, and one in an entirely new chapter.

If they weren’t good, thoughtful, necessary questions, the book would be for sale by now.

**But it wouldn’t be as good.**

**HOWEVER...**

How to Write Short Stories

I have writers waiting for their revision lesson in the Short Stories class, and until I revise *A Few Good Men*, and scan all my red-ink manuscript slaughter and filled-in worksheets demonstrating the process of thoughtfully and intently ripping a story to bloody shreds to get a BETTER story, they can’t get their lesson.
So today, *Vipers’ Nest* goes on the back burner until the revision for *A Few Good Men* is complete.

Wanna hear something funny?

**I think I can get this revised today.** You may laugh. Even as I wrote the words, my Muse snorted. The bitch.

At least I’ve already filled in most of my worksheets. []

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**So today I built the Bug-Hunter edition of Longview 5**

*By Holly Lisle*

Today I spent three Patreon hours putting together the bug-hunter version of *Longview 5: The One With The Broken Title*.

This involved cleaning up a significant amount of weird formatting in Scrivener – (my fault) – moving the project into .docx, then opening it in Vellum and doing the actual book formatting, setting and revising front matter, end matter, hand-setting the chapter heads and subheads, hand-setting the special text, picking the styles, and other little bits to make it look as close to the finished version as I can come.

It’s important that bug-hunters see the equivalent of finished text, and have real page numbers to work from. Books in double-spaced Courier look different, and some things get missed that show up in ... hell ... whatever font I ended up picking for the finished version. It’s a nice font.
Email requesting volunteers to bug-hunt will go out late this afternoon MY time, deadline is going to be about a week to read and get the bugs back to me.

I’ve heard back from some of my previous bug hunters, once the invite goes out, will pick six folks I’ve worked with before who did really good work, and six new folks.

I’ll be looking for a mix of folks who HAVE read the previous stories, and those who HAVEN’T, because each story needs to stand on its own.

And just for this book, bug-hunters who find a phrase or a situation in the story that would make a good title will be asked to include that with their bug-hunter sheets.

Because — DAMN. Vipers’ Nest was targeted right at the heart of the story, until the heart jumped five meters to the right and threw itself on the ground to avoid me. Now I don’t know what to call the thing.

This isn’t going to work…

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Longview 5 is DONE! (But isn’t Vipers’ Nest anymore)

By Holly Lisle

I’m going to need some beta readers for the story that was going to be Vipers’ Nest.

So much changed in the writing of it that the Vipers’ Nest in that title turned into a side plot, and the title no longer fits.

As I mention in the afterword (written just a few minutes ago) things change. This time they changed in magnificent ways. But they TOTALLY broke my title, so I’m going to be brainstorming new titles, too.

And because of a rather stupid cleanup of what I though were duplicates of a lot of old text files a month or so ago, I’ve discovered today that my lists of beta readers are gone to the Land of Lost Pixels.

A couple hours of hunting have given me a list of new swear words, but no old lists.

If you want to help me by beta reading / Bug hunting (it’s the same thing) THIS book, here are the steps:

- If you’re not already on my Everyone In One Place mailing list, sign up here.
- If you’re already on the list, or once you’ve signed up, watch for the email going out at two PM today, which
will also go out again at two PM tomorrow for folks who miss it. It’s going to be titled **The Beta Reader / Bug Hunter Invitation**.

- Beta Reader / Bug Hunter is going to be one of the choices in the “Choose your own adventure” game, but I’m still putting that together, and I actually need some bug hunters now.

If you would love to Beta Read/Bug Hunt, but missed this post and are reading after 2PM Eastern Time on Wednesday, June 13th, 2018, don’t worry.

I’m still putting together the Adventure, and once it’s built, everyone on the Everyone In One Place list will get to play through, pick your paths, and start doing some cool things or reading some new things, depending on the adventure you choose.

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**Finished the revision of Vipers’ Nest!**

By Holly Lisle

It’s done! It feels like I’ve been working on *Vipers’ Nest* forever.

I can’t believe it, but it’s finally fully and completely revised, and I LOVE the way it came out.

This has been a brutal project, because it hit in the middle of personal chaos, website chaos, GDPR chaos...
And for the longest time, I couldn’t find the ending.

Well, yesterday I suddenly realized what had to happen to get me to the ending, and ripped out one old scene, and wrote one brand new scene today, and nailed it.

It took me four and a half hours from the time I started today until the time I did my many, many back-up saves.

But THIS is the story I wanted to write.

So now there are the following steps I have to get through before the book goes live.

- Matt has to fit me in between clients for a content edit.
- I have to revise to his edit.
- I have to gather up volunteers for a bug hunt.
- I have to revise to clean up what the bug hunters find
- I have to build the publishable edition of the book, assign ISBNs, and put it up on all the sites where it’s going.

I’m going wide with this one – publishing it from the very beginning on every site that I can find that will pay me regularly and reliably.

From this point on, I’m eschewing Amazon exclusives. They haven’t done anything for my sales, and they have kept my books off of other platforms. I gave them the best run I could, and I can only conclude that following that path is not in my best interests.

So I have everything working its way out of KDP select, and by the time I have everything done to take Vipers’ Nest live, MOST everything else will be available for distribution elsewhere.
So... Back to work. Still have about a few thousand more words to write of How to Write Short Stories Lesson 4: How to END Short — Landing, Twist, Resolution, and Meaning.

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