

The Wishbone Conspiracy: I love it when a plan comes together

written by Holly

March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

Because I have the last Early-Bird Launch for *How to Write a Novel* going live on Monday, April 1st, and because I had to do a bunch of work on that first thing in the morning so I could send out emails, I got a late start on fiction today.

But the whole bullet-journal, check-things-off, stay-focused process works. Works *well*, even.

As soon as I got the emails out, I moved on to the next thing on my list – today's 2000 words on *The Wishbone Conspiracy*.

I finished the scene I was so excited about yesterday and loved the way it came together, moved on to the next scene, kept surprising myself by taking the story at different angles than the ones I'd expected, and finished up with 2043 words.

In spite of a tough start, today was a great writing day.

And I get to come in and do more tomorrow. And with a wink and a nod toward my post's title's reference to *The A-Team*, I really do love the way this book is coming together.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: 2204 words... AND a scene snippet

written by Holly
March 28, 2019
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Today I'm just posting a snippet because it surprised me.

I have this big, scary, rich guy in the story who's powerful and dangerous... and here's where Cady meets him:

[DISCLAIMER: This is copyrighted first draft. It may contain bugs, which WILL change in revision, and for which I do not need any notice of typos or other errors now, because first draft is not the place where you deal with those. Please don't quote or use in reviews – it might not make it to the final version of the book. Probably will... but no guarantees.]

With that said...

I'd been awake for over thirty-three hours, had eaten enough food for ten people during the banquet, had enjoyed the music and entertainers, and had found my host the most terrifying specimen of genetically altered humanity I had ever seen – and yet found myself laughing at his stories.

He was warm, friendly, funny.

He was sitting at the head of the same table as the rest of us, telling us a story about hunting down a pack of predatory saurids that had been attacking a village, and when he got to

the part where one of the monsters had circled around behind him and bit a chunk out of his ass, he stood, turned around, and yanked down one half of his pants, and showed us a missing chunk of posterior the size of my head and shoulders.

He laughed. "I still got t' little devil, and skint and et him. And got what's left of 'im stuffed and 'anging on me wall."

I was laughing so hard my eyes watered. One of the braver men said, "Why don't you have reju fix your – er – posterior?"

"And give up me gorgeous scar? Are ya daft, man? The ladies love it. And how else could I show 'em me ass in polite company?"

It was a good fiction writing day. Now on to the other stuff.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Totally left-fielded myself today. WOW!

written by Holly
March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

Oh.

My.

God.

Today was the day you want to be a novelist for.

Yesterday, I'd set Cady up with a banquet on an activity card, and a crazy thirty-plus hour schedule she was going to have to get through in which she would not have a single minute to herself, and in which she had to have at least a bit of alone time so she could plant the bugs her rescuers were going to need so they could find her before she got herself killed.

And then today, my right brain Muse threw me something so amazing, so crazy, and so PERFECT that I could not believe it. It came from the very darkest part of my life, from the places where I have seen things go wrong in horrible ways...where my reality and my close associations with loss and pain, and *how much you would do to fix things if you could*, come into play.

And yet, the scene is bright, and happy, and cheerful. Full of hope.

Devious as hell.

The perfect first-draft mid-point twist, and not AT ALL what I thought I was going to be writing today. It was, instead, a complete one-eighty from where I thought I was going to find myself.

I am so damned excited I want to keep writing, but I got my 2216 words, and had to get the bit from between the horse's teeth and rein him in.

Long list of other things I just have to do.

Won't have another Cady day until next Wednesday.

But lemme tell you, I am already looking forward to next Wednesday with delight. I love this woman and the crazy shit she gets herself into, and I love what's coming next.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: 2068 words, and I passed the halfway point

written by Holly

March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

This was a good writing day, in spite of the fact that I slept in, AND in spite of the fact that I had a hard time getting started this morning.

Pushups and coffee only go so far. Problem was, I woke up at around four AM, and couldn't get back to sleep, so I went out to hang out with Matt for a while, played several hours of No Man's Sky, and then napped for about an hour starting at 8 am.

Anyway.

Got Cady into a desperate situation, in which in spite of having taken every conceivable precaution, she is now disarmed and on her way to a process she knows is one hundred percent certain to kill her. And will have absolutely no opportunity to escape.

And I have just set the stage for the second conspiracy in the

novel, the one that is the reason for the current (probably awful) working title.

Which I hinted at earlier, and which is going to have a nifty little twist before I hit my ending.

The Mid-Point Twist (for HTWAN students reading this) was completely unplanned, but it fit within the structure and world I'd built, so it evolved to surprise me. I love when that happens.

Time now to get going on the other work of the day. But small happy dance here, because I am halfway done with this *The Wishbone Conspiracy*, and I still love it.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Flying words, and ONE word that summoned a new world

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

This morning was an awesome experience. First, I got 2117 words on *The Wishbone Conspiracy*. Fun words.

I woke up a little late, got started a little later, but nevertheless popped open my Scrivener document, headed into the last words I'd written, scanned my plan for the chapter, and jumped in.

The words started slowly— they usually do. But Cady was in a smartass mood, and made me laugh a couple times with things she said and did, and then stepped into a situation she wasn't expecting, and dealt with that a little less gracefully than one might have hoped.

As she sometimes does.

And in the middle of her dealing with the well-earned fear of the bad shit that's now racing straight at her, she used a funny word that stopped me in my tracks.

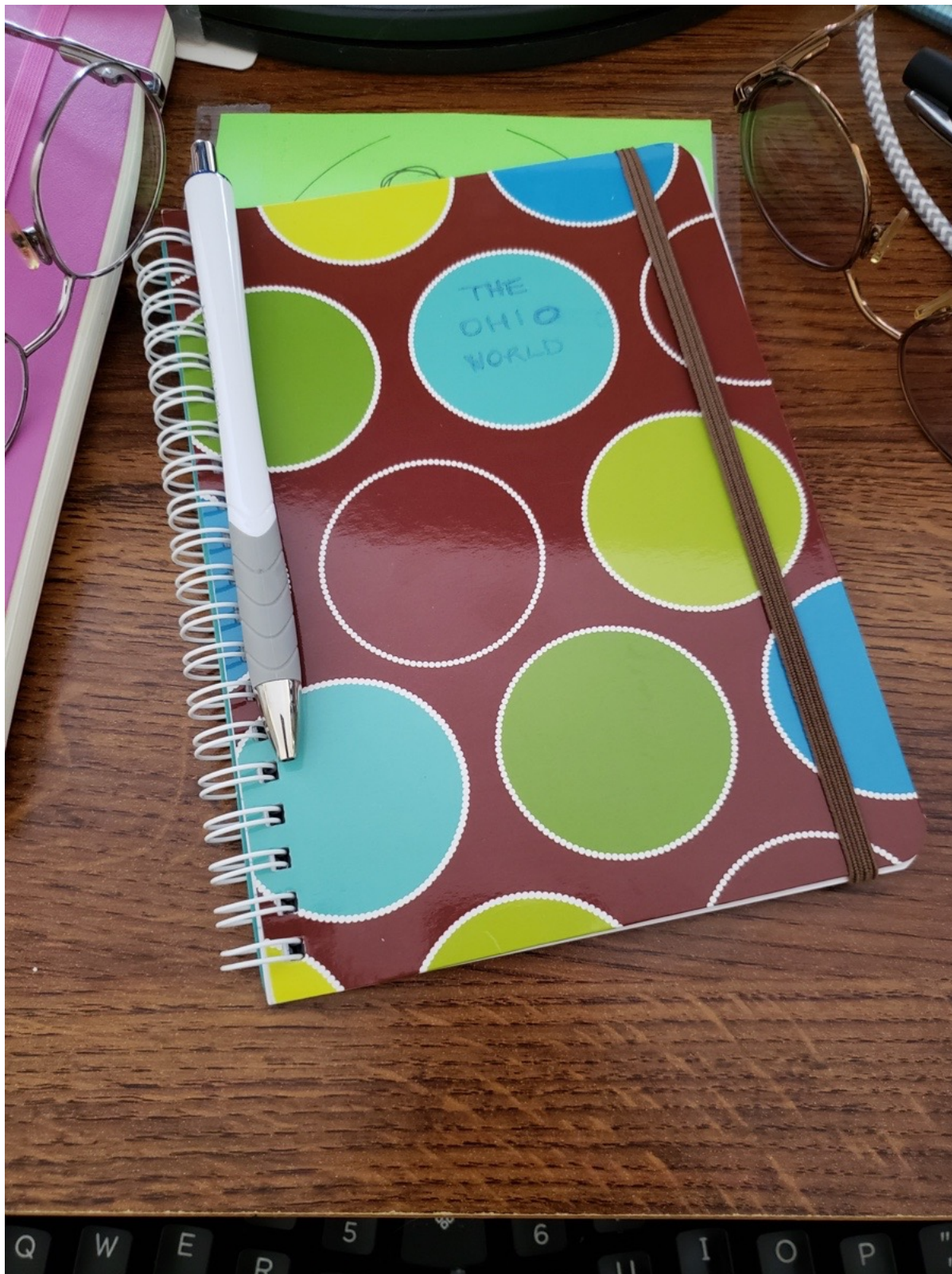
Not gonna share the word.

She made it up, it was the right word, had the right feel, and it summarized a situation she'd been in perfectly.

But that word also clicked for me on a completely different level.

That one word said, "*This* is what you were looking for. ***This*** word. Think *this*, think Ohio, think the series you were trying to get to come to life on you in the shower this morning...

I did. And all of a sudden my blue-ink Ohio World pen was racing across the notebook page, asking question after question after question, setting limitations, presenting conflicts.



This is the notebook, POST notes. Still steaming slightly.

So...

Not only did I get the words on *The Wishbone Conspiracy*.

I also got a hard lead on the new series I want to build. I got my main character, the problem she faces at the beginning of the first story, a GREAT series name, and a real sense of what the books are going to be about.

Urban fantasy in a place I love with a world I now cannot wait to write.

I will wait, of course. I have other projects that take precedence.

But now I can start into the preliminary work. Worldbuilding, Octopus map, overall planning... Stuff I can do for fun in my off-time, just because I love it.

Have I mentioned lately how much I love this job?

I love this job.

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**Just discovered the actual
genre for Cadence Drake...
derp!**

written by Holly

March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

Biopunk.

Biopunk?

BIOPUNK!

Real genre, I write it, I have been writing it since the late nineties... <le sigh>

So how exactly did I miss this?

How did I not realize this was a thing that those of us who love science and genetics and SF and fantasy were writing?

That would be the Epic Fail.

Thanks, guys. You are helping me beyond words, and I'm gonna write you a kickass story as thanks.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Crossed the 30K mark!

written by Holly

March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

Was not the smoothest start I ever had, considering I was at the desk and writing at 8:45 AM, and it's now 11:30 and I just finished my words.

I got a little distracted listening to Disturb's latest album, *Evolution*, which has some damn compelling lyrics. It's utterly loopable – I can just put the whole thing on replay and let it run. What it isn't, however, is background music. I keep stopping to hear the words, to think about the songs.

So I had to turn it off and just write in silence.

Today, Cady decided to do the dumb thing that will probably get her killed because... well, she has a lot of reasons, all of them compelling to her, none of them *reasonable* for all definitions of that word that do not include "this will probably get me killed."

So... fun writing once I got into a groove.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Words with wings, and conspiracy!

written by Holly

March 28, 2019

By Holly Lisle

Today went well.

Seriously, and it was a nice change.

Becky and I ran to a ten-minute timer, and in about two hours I got 2016 words – and I like them.

And I thought it would be fun to capture this morning's starting words and ending words as screen shots, and let you see what was on them if you're so inclined.

With the reminder that this is first draft, and that first draft is the chaos that a writer revises into a real story.

And with a side note that I utterly ignored my planned scene (written out in the right sidebar) in favor of something much better that occurred to me by asking a right question eight paragraphs down. (Not shown.)

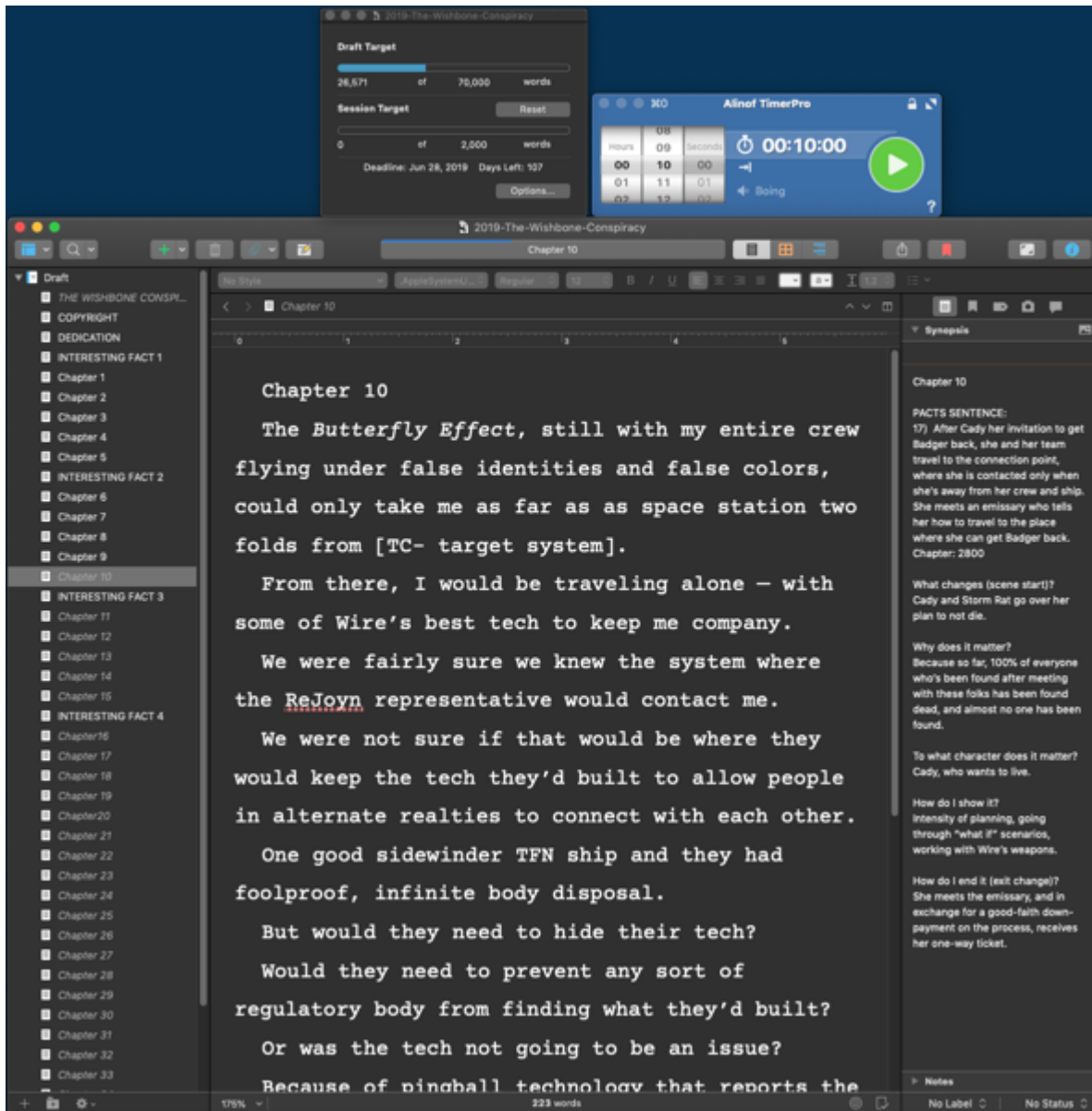
But I love the way this story is coming together, even though I can pretty much count on it being a book that once again gets a small readership, and will probably not pay me for writing it.

It is, however, a delight to write, and I get to ask one question that kept me awake a lot of nights.

DISCLAIMER: May contain bugs, which WILL change in revision, and for which I do not need any notice of typos or other errors, because first draft is not the place where you deal with those) Noted because I see a bug in the first screenshot.

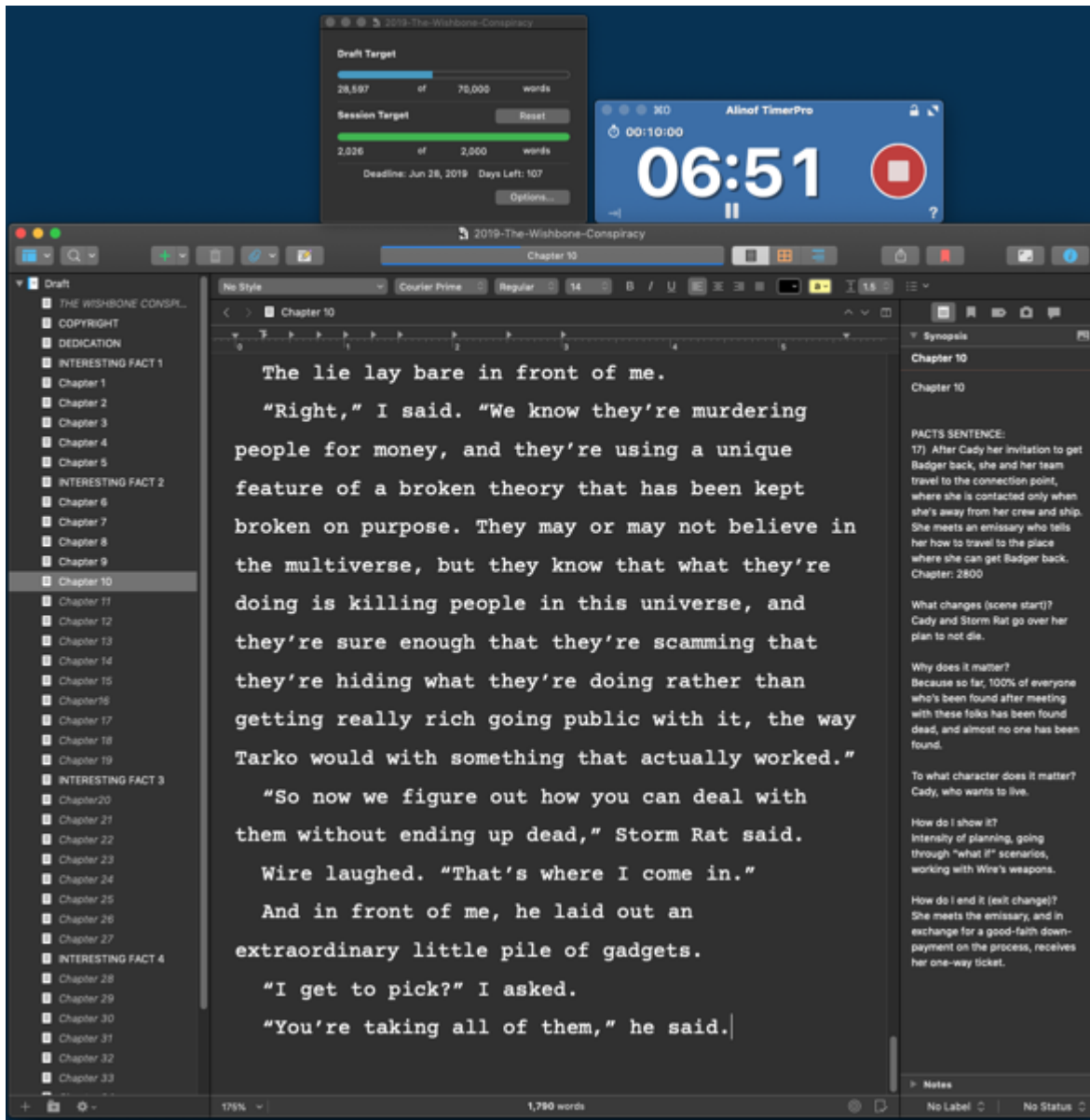
How does a multiverse work?

Screenshot One – In this image, the words on the screen are from last Friday (so not counted)... but influenced the two-thousand-plus words that follow. Click the image for the bigger picture.



[Click for the bigger picture](#)

And Screenshot Two – in which I got an ending to this scene that I really like. Again, click the image for the bigger picture.



[Click for the bigger picture](#)

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: Dark

written by Holly
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By Holly Lisle

Today was much rougher than it should have been. I got in early, got started, and the words just inched out. But at the point where Cady and Badger ended up face to face (in a fashion that is the core conflict of this novel), everything all of a sudden flowed like melting butter.

It was tough to write – I got a little choked up and teary-eyed, kept writing, got through the scene.

I love what I'm getting, but hate what's happening.

The result, however, was a good chapter, and 2001 words for the day.

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The Wishbone Conspiracy: 2027 words, and a Change in the 3-Novels Experiment

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Got pretty decent words today on *The Wishbone Conspiracy*. 2027 new words, taking me to a total of 23,873 words in the novel.

I mostly like what I got, though I had a bit of a hard start.

And that's what I want to talk about today.

The "Write on three different novels each week" experiment worked very well. Until it didn't.

I was writing first draft of *Dead Man's Party* on Mondays, first draft of **Moon & Sun: The Emerald Sun** on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and first draft of **Cadence Drake: The Wishbone Conspiracy** on Thursdays and Fridays.

Getting 1515 words or better on Mondays, about 1500 words on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and 2000-ish words on Thursdays and Fridays.

BUT...

It required a big mental shift, and rolling through three very different projects back to back to back started taking a toll on me.

I kept going... but then I started research in improving the marketing I've done – or in many cases haven't done – on my work, and current methods of increasing Amazon sales, and experimenting with copywriting and cover design and split testing and...

Along with writing the three novels, and writing a new lesson every week in my new **How to Write a Novel** class, and answering student questions, and working with Dan on getting the final pieces of the HollysWritingClasses.com website out of beta, plus spending time with my family...

Well, the fiction broke down just a little. And I hit what I have come to recognize as the “trying to do too much at once” wall.

Dead Man's Party has to stay. It's my demonstration novel for **How to Write a Novel**.

My writing on *The Wishbone Conspiracy* is still running smoothly.

But the writing on *The Emerald Sun* hit a wall.

This is a book I need to be able to throw myself into exclusively: to NOT be writing other fiction at the same time. It has a specific voice and some specific worldbuilding and a place it's going that is very different from other things I write. It has a deep world that I have not been writing in recently, characters who have become strangers to me, and both Tuesday and yesterday, my mind simply balked. Refused to work on *Emerald Sun*.

Was real damn happy to offer up copywriting, cover design, threw ideas at me for both *The Wishbone Conspiracy* and *Dead Man's Party*.

But it dug in its heels on what was supposed to have been the work of the day.

Had all my fiction crashed on me, I would be taking a different approach than the one I'm taking starting today, but two of three books – the one with NO previous worldbuilding, and the one with a ton of worldbuilding, but in which I've been writing regularly for the last eight or so years – are still fine.

So now I enter Phase Two of the experiment.

This is pretty simple. Monday will still be *Dead Man's Party*, and still 1515 words or thereabouts each week, followed by working on HTWAN, answering questions in the forum, doing the help desk tickets that require me, working with my moderators, working with Dan on the site, answering emails, and other daily task.

With *Dead Man's Party*, I have to have this amount, and JUST this amount, for my class and to make sure I'm applying the material from the various lessons as I write. So I can't just write ahead and be done with this particular novel. Each

chapter has to be written along with each lesson.

Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, I'm going to be shooting for 2000 words per day on *The Wishbone Conspiracy*.

That will give me six-thousand first-draft words on that book each week.

I currently have 23,873 words total, and with a 90,000-word target for completion of the first draft, need another 66,000 words (rounded) to hit my target.

So some book math. At 6000 words per week, I'll have the first draft finished in about eleven weeks. Figure I'll have it done around May 17th.

This is nobody's fastest pace on a novel ever, and if it were the only thing I was doing, I could get it done a lot faster. But it isn't, and what I'm looking for at this point is...

SUSTAINABLE FICTION CREATION.

A system that I can put into action and stick with, that will allow me to maintain my nonfiction work while creating regular publishable new fiction.

Now...

Those of you who didn't get sidetracked by the book math are going, "WAIT A MINUTE!!! What about Tuesday?"

Very good.

Tuesday, my first two to three hours will be focused on marketing my current backlist and learning how to do a better job of launching my front list.

It will also give me a clean break between Fiction Project One and Fiction Project Two.

And it will carry me to the completion of Fiction Project One AND Fiction Project Two at about the point where I also have the class **How to Write a Novel** completed in the Splinters version.

At that point, I'll have two finished novels in need of revision, editing, covers, marketing, bug hunting, launching, and publication.

And at that point, I'll figure out what happens next. I'll probably dive all the way into *The Emerald Sun* at that point.

And look at possible new writing classes or workshops I could create.

But as always...

This plan is subject to revision as I experiment and figure out new definitions for what I want to accomplish, and new ways to accomplish my objectives.

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