

Oh, such wicked fun today! 1257 words, and 44,099 total.

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I have only the vaguest idea of where the story is going right now. I'm a long way off of the planned outline, writing into the dark, following the conflict, and asking always, "What could go wrong?"

"What could go wrong?" is the right question for this section, for this book, for the aftermath of the resolution of one enormous problem I came up with over the past week or so... and for the whole slew of problems that resolution has created.

I love this story, these characters, this world... and I am fascinated by what's going on now. And because I don't know what's going to happen next, it makes going in to work each morning really damn easy.

Because I get to let my fingers put words to page, and I get to find out.

I don't usually write this way. I usually have a line-for-scene outline built, and while I get spontaneous material and outright surprises writing that way, everything more or less fits within what I planned.

This... doesn't.

This is something that happened that... well... took me completely by surprise, changed the nature of the story universe I've built, and makes what happens next wildly important.

And while I can definitely bring the series to a permanent close in this novel, what happened with my characters over

this least week does would make it really easy to write a whole lot of future novels in the same world.

Gut says I want to do that. Gut says that this world is a world worth staying in for as many books as I can make time for. Because this world keeps surprising me, catching me off guard, throwing challenges at me that I have to solve, and pushing me to think outside of boxes and systems to solve them.

A helluva lot of years into this gig, I'm still finding new ways to do things.

That as much as the stories I get to write is the thing that keeps this job delightful, and enchanting. And just really damn fun.

And that my Ohio world is pushing me into so many corners and forcing me to fight my way out of them is what makes THIS world worth writing in for a lot more than the four novels I've already written and the fifth one that I'm now halfway through.

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Uphill run on Ohio 5, but ended with 1209 keeper words for the day.

written by Holly
May 19, 2022
By Holly Lisle

I don't usually start with a lot of backing and filling. I read what I wrote the day before, and then I pick up from there and start writing.

Today, though, when I started writing the first time, it went wrong on me.

I had a vague idea what I wanted, and the only thing I really knew that what I was getting was that it WAS NOT that.

So... I figured out what I did want, and counter to what I generally recommend, I then went back and started over. (Fresh chapter, new page – it was pretty easy to delete and move on.)

And I came out of it with 1209 words I'm happy with.

And left myself in a good place to pick up tomorrow.

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**Wow! 1412 words, two hours...
And LIGHTNING struck! (Or...
“Am I making a huge
mistake?”)**

written by Holly
May 19, 2022
By Holly Lisle

I'd written myself into a corner yesterday, and I had absolutely no clue what was going to happen next.

See... Brain writes the outlines and the overall planning. Gut, however, writes the words, and Gut – like a willful horse – is entirely capable of getting the bit between his teeth and galloping straight toward whatever suddenly looks good.

Over the last few days (my time, not hers) my main character has experienced an appalling revelation, a near-death experience, and an unexpected triumph combined with a terrible loss...

And I thought she was still heading toward the same basic end-story objective, but getting there by some strange side paths.

I was still having to get there by pure pantsing, because I left my line-for-scene outline a couple chapters ago in pursuit of The Better Idea.

But today I found myself staring at a wall where I realized I'd just caused the utter obliteration of the ending I thought I was going to write.

Brain was muttering...

"Right... That thing you blew up yesterday was supposed to be the heart of your conflict for another five books after this five, and now... BLAMMO? You sure you want to save what you did yesterday? You can go back. Back is SAFE. Back in KNOWN. Back is the PLAN... and you liked the PLAN when you wrote it."

Gut held firm. Gut said, *"Don't be a chicken. You knew yesterday's stuff was cool when you wrote it, and now you want to wuss out and go with what's safe? C'mon! Grow a pair!"*

Small side note here while I point out that my gut is kind of a jerk sometimes... but it's almost always right about the fiction, so I have learned to look past the taunting to the meat of the argument.

Which is that what I got yesterday was really cool. Gut is absolutely right about that.

It isn't what I planned, but it's better than what I'd planned. It isn't Safe. But Safe in fiction, the Known in fiction, the Expected in fiction... are always *okay*.

They are NEVER fucking amazing.

And today I had to look at the loss of some words to return to the Safe Known. Or to keep moving forward in pursuit of the hope of bringing home something fucking amazing...

With the acknowledged very real possibility that I will fall on my face, absolutely wreck this story, and then have a gruelling, long slog through it when I go back through to do the One-Pass Five Book Revision <shudder> that waits for me at the end of this process. Where I will end up turning it into the book I'd planned to write.

I'm choosing to chase the chance to make this fucking amazing.

This may be a serious tactical error on my part, and if you find me in here next month muttering, "Yep... should have got back to the outline..."

Then...

You're invited to say, "Well, I thought you were nuts when you veered away from your plan into fresh new territory."

Not yet, though. Let's see where this goes.

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Monday... Arg! But got words, and managed to get some momentum...

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Not bad for a Monday. I mostly like the words I got – and the ones I don't like can sit there and think about what they've done until I come back around for the revision.

877 for the day, 40,225 total for the book, and I did manage to get a piece of one mystery in there, and I left myself in a good spot to pick up tomorrow.

So now...

Laundry.

And then the other Activities of Daily Living that get us all from today to tomorrow... when I shall write again. ☐

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A second day of uphill – but progress uphill is still

progress

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I'm at the midpoint of Ohio 5, the stakes are high, my MC has just discovered for the first time in the series HOW high... and, to rearrange some Rush lyrics that THEY borrowed, I've just discovered, from John Barth's *The Tidewater Tales*,

My characters will pay the price, but they will not count the cost.

I'd love to write further on the book, but today has not been easy, and brought with it both cause for a headache and the headache that followed.

So I'm going to take my 701 words, and my nearly 40,000 total, and say "good enough."

And disappear for the weekend, where I will play video games, and read books, and nap on the couch if the mood strikes me.

And Monday I'll come back, bringing new words to the story.

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Not a GREAT day... but I did get some keeper words

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I don't know if it's just me, but sometimes after I have a couple days where the writing just flies, and I love everything that hits the page, I have a day like this one, where it's pretty much like wading like knee-deep mud, and having it steal one shoe and not give it back.

(Ohio has mud that will do this. I suspect most places don't.)

I got words, and I like the words I got.

But there was no magic to it.

I also know that by the time I hit my read-through before I do the revision, I am incapable of telling the difference between the words I write when everything is rainbows and bunnies, and the words I write where it's uphill both ways.

So tomorrow I'll sit down again, and get more words. And they'll fly, or they won't. But they, like today's words, will move me closer to my goal.

So...

Onward!

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Hoo, BOY!!! 1356 words, and the conclusion to my favorite

scene in the book so far!

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I have 38,397 words in a novel that I'm thinking will need 90,000 to be finished.

Today's scene was actually the midpoint scene of the novel – the point where everything changes.

So it's not in the right place, and to get it to fit the book and be in the right spot, I'm going to have to drag it to the midpoint, and then build out the events that lead up to it.

I'm okay working like this. Scrivener is, in fact, designed so I CAN work like this. What I'll have to do is write several new thirty-word scene Sentences, drag them to the correct spots, and then go back and write the couple of disasters that took us to this point.

But today, like yesterday, the words flew, and while I had no clue what I was going to write until I wrote it, it fit, and it moved me, and I love what I got.

Days like this are pretty rare. I'm thrilled that I had two of them in a row.

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1250 Words on Ohio Five... and making myself cry. A LOT...

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I had no idea the events I wrote today were going to happen.

None. What I had planned was entirely different, and pretty good. But this was...

So...

Much...

Better...

My eyes are red, I've had to stop several times to go walk around in the kitchen and mutter to myself, and here's the thing. *Today's stuff is not the whole of what's going to happen.*

I stopped with 1250 words because it just happened to end the first part of the scene.

Tomorrow, when I pick this back up, I'll write the SECOND twist that I didn't see coming.

And I guarantee you that I'm not going to make it dry-eyed through tomorrow's writing, either.

I love this so much. I hate crying, but this part of the story surprised me, reached out and grabbed me, and made me love my characters so much more than I already did.

Done for the day, though.

I'll be back tomorrow, and I'll bring more words.

Ohio 5: 850 words net, and a WICKED new twist.

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

This was a “book woke me up and dragged me out of bed” morning.

The words didn’t come quickly, and I had to cut out some stuff that had been... well, really weak by comparison.

Love what I got, though. And I have left myself in such an awesome place for coming back into work on Monday.

Word count: 850 keepers, and 35,100 total. I’m getting there!

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“Something wicked...” might be me!

written by Holly

May 19, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Mondays can be hard starts. You're back into work after taking the weekend off, you're a bit cold on the book because you spent the previous week re-launching your writing classes and your mind has been elsewhere...

And the first hour, I did some gear-grinding and backing and filling trying to get back into the story.

Until I remembered what the guy who's in the current few scenes does for a living.

And realized that the town has a river I know really well (both in the fictional version and the real one), and thought about what rivers can hide...

And when I had that realization, all of a sudden my fingers couldn't move fast enough to get the words out.

GOD, I had fun!

Days like this, you just want to keep going...

But if you stop when you hit your word goal (or run a bit over it, actually, but not enough to hurt anyone), you can have a whole week of days like this.

So now I'm going to go work on [HollysWritingClasses.com](https://hollywritingclasses.com), getting my classes back on sale, and talking to new students, and seeing what it would take to set up a couple of virtual chats.

Onward!

<pursued by the echoes of my wicked giggles>

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