

# 1633 words, and I'm starting to get a feel for the story

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'm truly tired, but as this starts shaping up, I'm having more fun with it. My villain has a name now, and issues. And power that he earned all by his lonesome, and the hard way, to boot. He's the over-achieving entrepreneur of bad guys, and he even kidnapped his very own trophy princess, whom he ... er ... treats unkindly. Yeah. That's what he does.

Evil with ambition. That's the worst kind.

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## Back to work

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I've had my bit of a break. I have a long damned way to go tonight to get where I need to be, though. Not too encouraging.

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# Time to take a break

[By Holly Lisle](#)

The writing on the proposal isn't jelling tonight. I'm going to have to come at it from a different direction, and I'm going to have to do it after dinner. I'm way too hungry to think.

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# Structure is king

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Writing a novel is a gruelling process. Having written novels is great, but having written novels is a great deal like having taken a dump – you do it, you feel relief, and then the pressure builds up and you have to do it again. (Remember this the next time you think of writing as art.)

And then you're back to writing novels, which is a gruelling process. I'm in the middle of gruelling now, which does not involve doing obscene things with oats, though from the sound of it, it should. I have a very nice central conflict outlined for this book (still working on the proposal for **Talyn**) and I have a central character who is, though she does not know it, on the fast track to heartache and near-death experiences. I have a good, strong villain, an interesting social structure, a nice magic system quite different from the things I've used in previous novels. I have a theme, I have a story, I have a direction and a vision of what this thing can be.

What I do not have right now is some goddamned structure. I'm tempted to sit down with a long sheet of graph paper and try figuring this thing out like a math equation. I wish I were a more seat-of-the-pants writer. I really, truly, deeply wish that I could just leap in and write and to hell with the doubts, self-assessments, and nagging certainty that I could be doing it better. Or the realization that this thing is, if it sells going to be paying the bills for the next couple of years, and what I do now is the difference between fresh fruit and canned, and maybe some Christmas presents for everyone next year. Pressures like that do not in any way make the process of writing easier or more fun.

But writing while holding down a day job sucks, and after eight day-job-less years ... well ... screw that.

Back to structure. I need some. And Schenectady is fresh out.

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# So, chin up, say 'to hell with the world,' and just write

[By Holly Lisle](#)

My plan today is to get a significant portion of the proposal for **Talyn** done.

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# Here's just a teaser of what I'm working on

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I like Talyn's voice. This is her on her way to an assignation

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*Nor did it hurt my fantasies that I'd always thought he fancied me a bit. I'm no golden beauty like Nadee, but I have my charms – two of which I'd laced into my bodice so they poked out a bit, in the hopes that Fean might be as happy to see me as I would be if he were that happy to see me. If you get my meaning.*

*Work with what the wee gods give you, I always say.*

*"I'll be quick as I can," I promised Nadee, and fled, hoping that I would not be able to be very quick at all. Six years in the Cloisters might have given me the best education to be had, but halfway through my sixth year of ceaseless meditation, magic and religion, I yearned for excitement – and, frankly, sex – the way a klaue yearns for beer.*

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## 795 words, and I'm feeling my

# way through a story

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I'm not sure where the outline for **Talyn** is taking me. I'm wandering through the dark, hands outspread, grabbing onto every rock and ledge I can find and hoping that I'm moving toward the sound of running water.

That's the story. It's running water, and when I'm lost in the dark, I keep fumbling toward it, tricked by echoes that make it seem to be someplace that it isn't. I spend a lot of time backtracking, a lot of energy trying routes that prove to go nowhere. Sadly, in the world of novel writing, no one has yet invented the flashlight and the map. Every novel is an adventure in the dark, over all-new terrain, and running water is forever elusive.

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## 1061 words on TALYN

[By Holly Lisle](#)

And time to quit. I'm tired, and I don't want to stop having fun. As long as I quit while I'm still rolling, it's easier to come back to the next day.

I have a nice chunk of the chapter done. I won't finish it tonight, nor will I do any of the outlining – but I've put in a respectable day's work.

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# Starting into the next thing

[By Holly Lisle](#)

Little guy's asleep, now I can get to work on the proposal. I've been thinking about this all day, and am excited about what I'll be writing on it tonight. I'd like to finish the sample chapter, and maybe do some of the synopsis of the remainder.

We'll see how it goes. I have a lot of energy left right now.

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# First work on the proposal

[By Holly Lisle](#)

I spent a ridiculous amount of time setting up proprietary dictionaries for each of my current projects before I got started today – but with a separate Word dictionary for each project, I'll have the beginnings of a style sheet already put together to submit with the manuscript when it goes to the editor and copyeditors – a tip I got from a writers' list I'm on.

Pretty neat. I'm a bit late getting started, though, and I think I'll work on the proposal a bit. I was doing the

dictionary for it, and fell in love with the main character again, and I want to hang out in her head for a bit before moving back to other stuff.

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