

Today I studied the map, asked WHY... made good progress on OUTLINE 5... figured out why YESTERDAY crashed...

By Holly Lisle

Can't say today was easy. I walked in circles (literally) because pacing helps me generate ideas, talked to myself out loud to ask important questions, looked at my map and drew a few circles on it to identify story issues...

And then I went back to the line-for-scene outline and managed to come up with eleven line-for-scene sentences, a MASSIVE conflict I'd forgotten to consider while pushing for the series end, and now not only do I love the new direction the series takes in the final novel...

But I cannot wait to write the damn thing.

Could stuff in BOOK 4 break things in the final outline between now and then?

Sure.

Could I hit some sort of wall tomorrow while figuring out the remaining eleven LFS sentences?

Oh, most certainly.

But there are solid principles to storytelling that I follow... and if I don't end up using what I have now, it will only be because I have something that is provably better.

About the Tuesday Crash...

I forgot that I hadn't had any food since Sunday at about 7 p.m.

It's a mostly regular intermittent fasting thing we do – one meal a day Tuesday through Sunday, then don't eat again until Tuesday at around 7 p.m.

And mostly that works just fine. Sometimes, though, I get a little hungry by Tuesday morning, and instincts kick in that send me in search of food: BODY gets up and walks to the fridge or to the cashew can, BRAIN grabs body, turns it around, and sits it back at the desk, BODY waits until brain is engaged in though (so not paying attention) and walks over to the damn fridge again...

That, with multiple repetitions, was Tuesday.

Tomorrow, I have eleven more Line-For-Scene Sentences to go to finish the Book 5 outline.

So – this is within reach... and I should be back to writing Book Four on either Friday or Monday.

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Unscheduled Day Off ... ugh!

By Holly Lisle

If it's been a while since you've done a longer fast, you forget.

Intermittent fasting, where you maintain a no-snacks rule and eat at around six or seven every evening is dead simple. You adapt, you don't feel hungry or deprived, and every day you

have plenty of energy to do everything you need.

Longer fasting isn't like that. You're running on yourself – feeding yourself out of fat stores – and breaking down those fat stores requires a fair amount of energy. But the weird thing is, you have energy to burn. It's hard to sleep, it's hard to relax, because your body is keeping you up and running so that you can, you know, run down a gazelle or go out with the rest of the gang and bring down a mastodon.

The objective of our bodies is to keep on living. Our bodies remember starvation, because they're the offspring of the people who survived it.

They know that you burn fat to keep the body up and running, set its energy to HIGH, keep it awake, keep it moving, because the creature that keeps moving is the creature that has a chance to find food.

When food hits your system, however, Primitive Body says, "That's enough of that."

And the energy doesn't just drop back to normal. It drops to way below normal, so that you can rebuild those necessary fat stores that will keep you going through the next famine.

I'm in that trough right now (and reminding myself that intermittent fasting doesn't have energy peaks or troughs, which is why I like it). I had to drag myself out of bed. It was an effort to shower.

And even thinking my way through this post is a struggle. So.

I'm taking today off. When I'm done, I'm going to stretch out on the couch and maybe read. And probably sleep.

And ask myself if I really want to make a three-day fast a weekly part of my regimen. Anti-cancer... very good.

Self-inflicted feeling like shit?

Maybe not my best choice when I'm getting words and finishing books.

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No jury duty, 1588 words, and am now over 20% through Book 3 of 5 (also... fasting...)

By Holly Lisle

I'm grateful for writing, and for being well into a story that holds my attention and makes me need to know what happens next.

Having been fasting since Sunday night, I've now had nothing but coffee, water, and vitamins for long enough that my hindbrain has started taking action against me.

My legs keep picking me up and walking me into the kitchen and toward the fridge – until my mind catches them at their treachery and turns me around with some difficulty and walks me back.

But all the news is good news.

Being notified last night that **I'm released from jury duty** until the next term when I'm drawn, I was able to focus on the fiction (in between the fights between my mind and my legs), and get some good, tight words.

1588, well over my 1250-word objective.

I threw myself into the story, and managed to not open the fridge, or touch any little “just something” snacks.

I am not by any means world’s greatest student of the art of fasting – but I can keep reminding myself that we’ll all eat tonight, and use that knowledge to reassure the part of my brain sending me in search of food when I forgot to block it that a meal is, in fact, not far off.

On today’s bit of the story: A father tells a daughter how she is to leave home – and why. And in her I found the replacement for the character who I’d planned for her role (while doing those five line-for-scene outlines), and who was entirely wrong for this particular part.

This is the third of five novels, and in it, a central battle is building – and NOW I have the right character to step into the role I’d arbitrarily assigned to an existing character who didn’t have the strength or the skills to carry it.

Total word count: 19,799. **I passed 20% of the first draft finished when I hit 18,000, but didn’t notice.**

And since I always run at least a bit long, today’s word count is probably closer to a true 20%.

Now I’m off to do the rest of the day’s work. And the rest of this week is mine without concern for being pulled away from my writing by jury duty.



Readers – Join this list to be invited to the Ohio Novels launch when it’s ready!



Today’s words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



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Good wordcount, a good concept... but, jury duty willing, tomorrow I'll be doing a fair amount of fixing

By Holly Lisle

Yesterday's jury duty message was, boiled down, "Call again today." So at 5:30 tonight, I'll find out whether I'll be working tomorrow or not.

Meanwhile, instead of my daily short fast (from the night before until around 4 or 5 PM, when I eat my daily meal) – I'm doing a long fast.

For folks familiar with intermittent fasting, my daily eating-to-fasting ratio is anything from 1:23 to 3:21. And some weekends are "any hours if it's keto".

But this week, my last food was Sunday evening. And I will

have my next food on Wednesday at around five or six PM (or whatever time I leave the courthouse, if there is a session and if the day's work runs longer than that).

Meanwhile, I'm a bit – skittery. A bit predatory.

I've learned that when you fast, after a couple days your body starts ramping up energy, pushing you to get up and move, to go out and hunt things, to find something tasty and kill it because you need to feed the fat stores – because those stores are the stuff you're suddenly running on exclusively.

Fasting is very, very good for those of us who at one time had cancers fed by blood glucose – and being down about two thirds of the right side of my tongue to remove a lot of dysplasia and a tiny bit of cancer, and thinking I might prefer to hang on to the rest of my tongue, I eat very few carbs.

Carbs raise your blood sugar, blood sugar feeds susceptible cancers – and tongue surgery after the anesthesia wears off hurts about a hundred times worse than wide-awake no-medications-not-even-Tylenol childbirth. I've done both.

Anyway.

I got 1446 words, and met the character I needed to meet today, and she's talking to me from her point of origin – but the voice I originally had for her is wrong. I'll be able to keep a lot of today's words, but my start tomorrow – if I'm here writing – will be to read through from the point where she starts speaking and bring the first bits of voice up to the stuff I got toward the end that is better.

If I don't... well, she'll wait.

I've met her now. I like her. And introducing her to my MC before the event that happens on (book time, not real time) Friday before the concert is going to be interesting.

The words weren't perfect. But they were good enough to take

me where I need to go.



If you want to be invited to my Readers' List for the Ohio Series, sign up below. This is the weekly blog digest, but only folks on this list will be invited to the Ohio Series launch list.



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1286 words, and a nice twist in the story.

By Holly Lisle

I got my 1250 words with a few extra today, though it took longer than three hours, and there are a fair list of things I didn't get done... and that I'll have to do tomorrow, so there

might not be any (or many) words Thursday.

What I got was hard going, but I like it. My hero is dealing with a secret from her grandmother's past, and a new acquaintance whose own grandmother just died – and a deeply disturbing connection between these two dead grandmothers.

And monsters.

And a bit of magic, or something indistinguishable from it.

Good writing day.

I've been fasting since Sunday morning (meaning I had a cup of cashews Sunday morning, and have had nothing but water and coffee since) and I won't eat anything until about six PM tonight, so I'm a smidge grumpy.

So, with a fair amount of work still pending, I'm going to move all of it until tomorrow in my bullet journal, and call it a day today.

Hang in!

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Trauma, memory, and my main character – 1283 words

By Holly Lisle

I got some of my favorite words in the series this morning. (1283 of them, in fact.)

My MC (main character) had a BAD morning a couple chapters back, and finally made it back home in this chapter – worse for wear, but not as much so as one would have reason to expect.

She's discovered – as a lot of us do – that there are things she left in her past that haven't quite finished with her.

She'd discovered – as a lot of us do – that she isn't exactly the person she believed herself to be, and as memories catch up with her, she's realizing that she might not have as much reason to like herself as she thought she did.

Like everyone, she has some monsters in her closet.

Hers just have bigger, pointier teeth than yours or mine.

And at one point way back in her past, one of those monsters might have been her.

And I got to pull in some bits from my own experience on dealing with trauma, and how it catches up with you even years after the fact and shakes you when you're vulnerable and unprepared.

She's tough, my MC.

She'd better be. Because I know what's coming down the road for her over the next couple days of writing, and she doesn't.

Oh, yes. Because some of my characters tend to eat the way I'm eating at the time, she's making good use of keto. (Except for the cookies.)

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Beat the headache. 1278 new words, and a good twist.

By Holly Lisle

First, the headache, because it was the biggest obstacle I faced this morning.

Over the holidays, we did an intentional, planned drift away from keto so that we could have some fun foods. Pies, you know, and cookies, and stuff like baked potatoes and stuffing. We hadn't done this before, but we hadn't dealt with last year, before, either, which sucked... and just for the holidays, we agreed to be a little flexible where food was concerned.

We all three had fun eating. We all three also gained a little weight. Not a lot – we were still doing intermittent fasting – which for us is generally one meal a day, or, if you're figuring in ratios, 1:23. One hour in which we eat, twenty-three in which we don't.

We also widened our ratios, to about 6:18, which is still about as wide as we care to go.

Back to the headache. When you return to keto, you get a headache. I'm going to be able to count on this one for a good week before my body readjusts and it goes away.

Was it worth it?

Dunno. Ask me in a week, by which time the headache should

wear off.

But throbbing, banging head pain aside, I did get 1278 words today that I really like, while cleaning up and adding to the scene I started last Friday.

I've met some new bad guys. My main character finds the smaller one adorable and truly compelling, and is not having the easiest time in the world seeing him as a "not someone I should love". There are reasons for this beyond the fact that that my delightful villain is someone most human beings would want to take home and be friends with forever.

The bigger bad guy is NOT anything like the little one. But might have some good surprises for me as I keep writing.

Writing the conflict in the scene today, and figuring out what was truly going on as I wrote it, was a blast.

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