

I'm off my game – had a bad writing day. 486 words.

By Holly Lisle

So here's the deal.

I have jury duty coming up next Monday. Have never done it before, but I didn't try to get out of it. I'm a citizen. This is part of what being a citizen means.

So if there's an upcoming trial scheduled during my period of service, (which I won't know until Sunday night), I will not be here next week.

If there is a trial, I'm going to go in to the courthouse, and I will take a notebook with me, and write in longhand in between whatever the process is that includes picking jurors, and do my best to work on the story, or if not the story, then on collateral worldbuilding.

Today, though, I've had a helluva time focusing.

I managed in spite of the upcoming potential chaos to my schedule to start out by reading through yesterday's words, deleting junk and getting new stuff – my daily process...

And I came out with a net gain of 486 words, which is better than nothing.

But my focus is off. I'm tired, I'm grumpy, I'm frazzled, and every once in a while, you have to look at the fact that you've been struggling and flailing and not getting anything you actually like, and you have to say, "Okay. I've had my ass in the chair since before 8 AM, and I have had nothing even resembling a breakthrough."

"Time to walk away."

If there is a trial and if I am chosen as a juror, I am anticipating NO WORDS next week.

AND if I am chosen, and the trial is big, there might one or several more weeks in which I won't be here, other than to let you know that I'm doing my civic duty, and to let you know when I hope to be back – **and then to tell you when I am back.**

I'll miss you while I'm gone.

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Tougher day than expected: 1106 words, a bit of ripping out... and the whiff of “big bad”

By Holly Lisle

I always start my words by reading through what I wrote the day before, and fixing a few typos, and getting myself back into the voice of the book –

And I discovered I'd been redundant yesterday, repeating a fair amount of material across a break between two chapters.

So I started out the morning my losing a bunch of words, then writing my ass off, and not quite hitting my daily objective, in spite of most certainly having written enough words to have done so.

But these are the breaks. Some days, you run out of time and

discover you've come up a bit short.

I still love what I got – and bad, bad things are definitely in motion for my MC and her friends.

Somebody else might end up on the slab tomorrow...



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1281 words, the start of chapter three, and we're deep in the muck now!

By Holly Lisle

Today the words just flew. I was late getting started, and I'm

still done with the fiction before 11 AM!

Which is fortunate, because I have a lot of NOT fiction I have to deal with today. But I got my words first, and I love what I got.

My MC got the proof that the corpse was murdered – this is not a spoiler, so I can happily state that. The spoiler would be why... which she doesn't know yet, but I mostly do.

And the town's ambient magic, and the folks who know how to use it for evil, are involved. Again – not a spoiler.

But to be able to live in the mundane version of the place I'm writing, to be able to use my existing house as one of the settings, to be able to get all the plants and animals and folks right because I'm actually living here and writing here (or at least a version of "here" that never was, and never could be) is a daily joy.

Off now to deal with the much less delightful "other stuff."



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Mondays, Death, and Taxes: Life's Sure Things

By Holly Lisle

I did not get everything done on taxes over the weekend – and being self-employed is not anything like working a 9-to-5 job where you get money back. When you're self-employed, you always owe. Making sure you find and identify the receipts for everything that was deductible, therefore, is a critical and damned stressful task.

It's probably going to take me the rest of today to mark up all the deductible stuff on the receipts, and get all the paperwork into some semblance of order, and kick the Annual Stress Inducer out the door.

NEXT week, I'll have jury duty (pending the county court having trials going to jury, but I won't know for sure until Sunday night).

Tomorrow through Friday of this week, then, I'll get to write fiction.

But today is just going to be a continuation of YUCK.

Hope your Monday is better.

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Today is brought to you by math...

By Holly Lisle

This isn't the way I want to spend a Friday, but I cannot ignore the fact that I have to sort all my receipts, mark every single item that is deductible, gather up all the papers, pack them up, and get the box to my accountant.

Even really shitty years produce a stack of paperwork, and no matter how much I want to do the next 1250 words on Ohio 3, I can no longer ignore my Tax Nest Monster, which is glaring at me from its box under the desk.

This project might, in fact, be my Friday, Saturday, and Sunday... but I'm going to be back to the Ohio Novels and book three on Monday.

I'd like to say that I'll be well-rested and raring to go.

But what are the odds?

Either way, even if I come into Monday tired and cranky, I can still get words, and it will be okay (for me, if not for my characters)... because once all five novels are written in first draft, I'm going through a massive five-book One-Pass Revision, which is where the magic happens.

Magic Monday, or magic later... Same results either way.

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Mystery character D- became S- today as I got to know her better: 1330 words, and a good, solid scene

By Holly Lisle

Folks show up when you're writing, and audition for parts, and as you start writing them, you don't know whether you're wasting every word that includes them, or whether they're going to make your story better.

You haven't planned them. You have no idea who they really are, or how they fit into your story – but in the immediate moment, you give them names and let them run with the solution to the problem you're having at right then... and you hope for the best.

Sometimes they turn out to be disasters, and sometimes you only realize deep in the middle of the book – when they've broken everything you've planned and have not replaced it with anything better. (As with my novel originally titled *Closer to Chaos*, which was published as *The Wreck of Heaven* after it nearly wrecked ME.)

Sometimes, however, you realize these volunteers are people you loved who are long dead – memories summoned from your childhood to carry a little bit of the book for you, and maybe do something meaningful in your world.

The character who showed up yesterday as as D- turned out to be an avatar of a beloved aunt of mine, changed in almost

every way except for the quality of her character as a human being. And S- was the name the character, once I got to know her better today, picked for herself.

My aunt was wonderful, and I miss her terribly. And now she, as someone almost entirely new, has at least a small part in this story.



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Ran past my word-count objective because ... you know

... corpse... 1417 words (of 1250 planned)

By Holly Lisle

In all fairness, I did know there was going to be a dead body today.

I knew, vaguely, whose it was going to be.

But that was it. As I started writing, people started showing up, and bits and pieces of action started unrolling before my eyes, and a new character who is going to be at least somewhat important in this book showed up, and keeps jamming her pointy elbow in my ribs saying, "I could be important for a long damn time..."

And she might be right. I like her. She's related to the corpse, and she reminds me of a long-dead family member of my own that I loved dearly, and there is a corpse-vacated spot in the book for her already sitting there, open and waiting to be filled by someone.

I have a firm rule, however – Never trust walk-ons to not screw up your story.

So D- will get this scene.

I'll let her float around in the back of my mind while I work through the planned outline, and see if she can step into the vacated spot and be useful without being destructive.

The story itself is coming along grandly.

Tomorrow will be me, the corpse... and some little hint of the *bad* that's running in the undercurrent.

I don't know what this *bad* is. That's not part of the outline.

I need it to be organic, I need it to fit the past two books, and I need to let it surprise me. If it doesn't surprise me, it won't surprise you.

So. Good writing day. Could potentially fuel a lot of fun writing for the rest of the week.

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Ohio #3 – 1585 words, and introducing the first problem

By Holly Lisle

I got off to a rough start today – slept in, which I hate, and got distracted by email, which in general I don't even open until I get my words...

But. I got good words. I got my establishing scene, the 'new normal', then rolled right into the first problem, which doesn't look like much in the same way that the tip of an iceberg doesn't look like much.

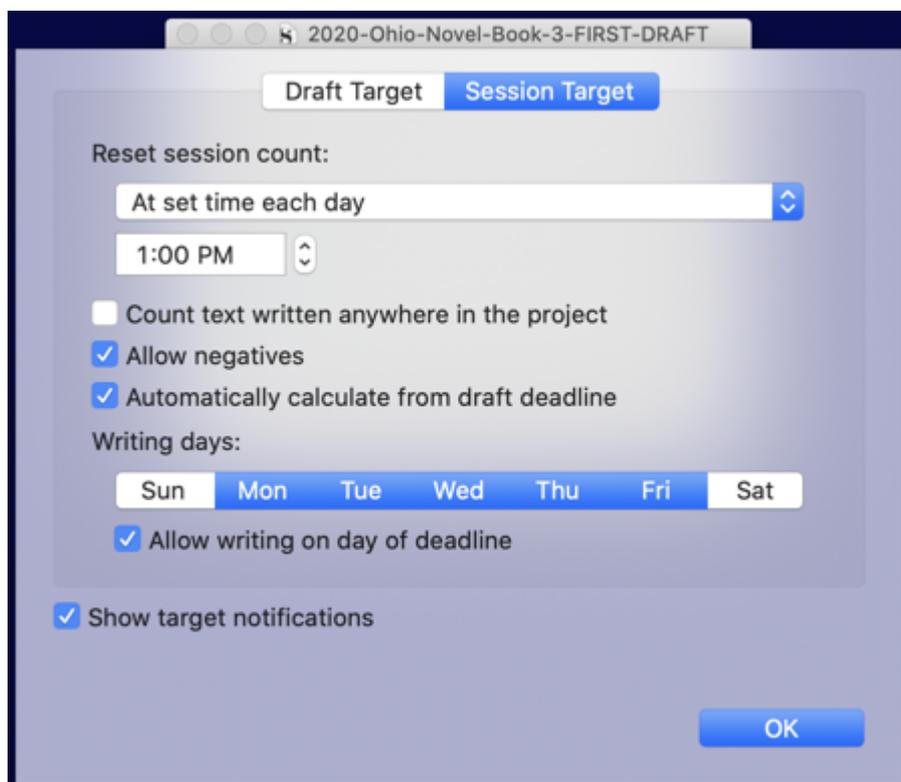
I'm happy with my progress, and looking forward to doing this again tomorrow.

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So... Monday. Document built, outline set up, and 522 words of fiction written on Ohio #3

By Holly Lisle

So. Built my Ohio Book 3 line-for-scene outline into Scrivener's nifty sidebar today (can't show – way too many spoilers). But I can show how I have the document set up to make sure (at least as sure as possible) that I'll stay on deadline, even though I came in under the count today.



I gave myself extra time (until 1PM every workday) though I try to be done with the writing at about 11 AM.

I slept in until eight this morning (two hours over my usual wake-up), so I got started late.

I slept really well last night, which is unusual for me. But I haven't adjusted to the time change, and as I do every year, I

gave Benjamin Franklin a hearty round of cursing for his "Daylight Saving" time.

How 'bout we just let people who want to leap out of bed at six AM, my preferred time, do that?

And let the folks who want to sleep in until seven or eight or noon do THAT?

Anyway... back to the set-up. You can see that I'm allowing for the tracking of negative words, since sometimes I rip out a thousand or two at a time, and I need to know how that affects my progress. And need to be able to show that to the folks reading this.

I have Saturday and Sunday cleared because I need that two-day weekend to unwind, and if those days count on the deadline, I think I have more elbow room to hitting it than I actually do.

And I have the automatic calculation of the words I need to get each day set up instead of my preferred flat 1500, just because it's the only ways to get the automatic calculation... which is a lot more handy coming down to the deadline wire than the reminder that I want to hit 1500 words a day. That I can remember.

And... I like the words I got today. IN REAL LIFE, I got more than this, but the first part of what I got was adding an extra scene in Book Two that gives it a nice rounded-out ending.

And then I started with today's beginning, which starts out nice. Tomorrow, it's going to end pointy, with teeth.

But boy, doesn't the progress part of that progress bar look pitiful right now?



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**Today was the second of two
“writing cool-down” days.
Monday... BOOK THREE.**

By Holly Lisle

Today I answered more emails, and tried to get some writer T-shirts and other things up on Teespring, which has just completely redone their software, causing me to lose all the work I'd put up there over the past couple of weeks.

The upcoming merchandise – T-shirts and bags and a few other things – is all for writers right now. On very good advice from both readers and writers, I won't be offering any Ohio novel stuff until the series has fans who want it.

So this post is just to let you know I'm around, but that I'm taking the necessary break from the project before I go back to that third outline and set up the document in Scrivener and start writing.

I need to read it cold while I'm entering the outline sentences into each chapter. I'll be able to spot obvious problems then.

The sly, subtle problems, of course, will hide out until revision to cause the absolute maximum head-beating and swearing.



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