

# The Air Force Kid Update

written by Holly

April 28, 2008

By Holly Lisle

Aaaaaghh! I should have details, but I am so grateful for what I do have that I'm posting it anyway. Have not heard from the AFK in ages, because he's been doing missions—he warned me in advance that this would be the case, and in theory I should have been at least relatively calm, because he has so far been okay, even while doing missions.

But I'm a mom, and theory falls down hard in the face of reality a lot of the time, and I have been...worried. I'll leave it at that, because my kind of worried does not just drive me crazy, but also the people around me, and, well...yes.

I have been worried.

So.

We went out to dinner at Ryan's yesterday and then, because I wanted to see Ben Stein's *EXPELLED: No Intelligence Allowed*, a documentary in which my personal interest was my distaste for the current trend to teach Darwinism as religion, we went to the movies. We have not been to an evening movie since the midnight showing of *Transformers*. This one was well worth seeing, but I still wish I'd had better timing in pushing to see it.

[ –DIGRESSION FROM THE AFK STORY– ]

I rate *EXPELLED* in two parts, first half, and second half, give the first half a C- for use of emotional manipulation and poor, poor presentation of the actual argument, and give the second half an A- for getting its head out of its ass and actually presenting the issue along with the consequences of the issue, while still unnecessarily defaulting to emotional

manipulation when the arguments were strong enough to stand on their own two feet. I loved the moment when Richard Dawkins, evangelist of atheism, admitted that he could allow intelligent design if we wanted to posit that really, really smart aliens seeded the worlds with life...if THOSE aliens spontaneously generated. (*Aliens, dude? Really? That's the best you can come up with?*)

For my money, the alteration of species over time via natural selection and punctuated equilibrium is well-documented in the fossil record, as well as through observable changes in species on the planet demonstrable in our lifetimes. The spontaneous generation of life from inert primordial soup has not been proven, and until humans can replicate it, claiming spontaneous generation of life as science without one shred of evidence is as ludicrous as claiming that God created the earth in seven days and all life on it in the last few. The instant you demand faith to explain what science cannot, and demand that all other possible explanations be ignored in favor of your faith-based one, you have a religion, whether you get all red-faced and stomp up and down and call it science or not.

[ -END DIGRESSION- ]

Anyway. While I was watching the movie, I missed two calls back at the house from the AFK. *Two.*

So I know that he's okay, and not one damned thing more. **But** I know that he's okay, and that's huge. Not just for me, but for my guys, both of whom I have been driving crazy by worrying.

## **Added some hours later:**

The Kid just got through. They got hit this time out, but everyone is okay. And his biological father—the molester (felony, convicted, plea-bargained down from MUCH worse charges)—is not doing well, and the Kid is having a hard time

dealing with it. This particular issue is a lot more complicated than it sounds. But basically, when the molester dies, it is the death of hope. Hope that the molester will say he's sorry for what he did, that he'll take responsibility, that he'll, even just for a day, be the father and human being he should have been instead of the lying, abusive *creature* he was. The death of hope is not an easy thing to face. Not for any of us.

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## And Good News from The Air Force Kid

written by Holly

April 28, 2008

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The Air Force Kid just called. He's okay, which is huge for me. On a mission, no details given or asked for, but he did get a chance to check out the weblog and leave a couple of notes, so I got congrats from him on finishing the book. (He also got the first reader's copy of **The Ruby Key**. I only got four of those, and with a husband and three kids in different places... well, you do the math.)

Anyway. Okay. Intact. Happy, even. This is big. And I got the usual "Hi, Mom!" from buddies in the background, and the sort of worrisome "We're taking care of your boy..." with echoes of wicked laughter following. ☐

He's with good people, he's glad to be doing what he's doing, and glad he enlisted. And he added that the Air Force was the

best thing he ever did for himself.

When you consider that he is way in the middle of harm's way and under attack regularly, this is one hell of a statement. I'm so proud of him.

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## Giving Thanks, A Day Late

written by Holly  
April 28, 2008  
By Holly Lisle

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. For me, I'm thankful this year that:

My 24-year-old daughter, who was rushed into emergency gall bladder surgery at 0-dark-hundred on Thanksgiving morning, came through it okay, and that she had someone who cared about her who could be with her in the critical first hours after surgery, when I could not be there (one car, 1200-mile round trip, husband who had to be at work at 5 AM today because he's the boss and this is Black Friday);

That my 22-year-old son has a buddy whose cellphone works all the way from the Middle East, and that he let my son borrow it to make a call home... and that my son didn't call **before** I knew his sister was all right;

I am thankful for:

Cell phones, which have made it possible to reach people in places that would, just a few years ago, have been impossible;

For my big guy and my little guy, who reassured me that everything would be okay, and who turned out to be right;

And for six or seven pounds of potatoes, which took a real beating from scrubbing and chopping while I was waiting to hear how she was doing. Cooking is sometimes not at all about preparing food.

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# And All the Pieces Are Back Together

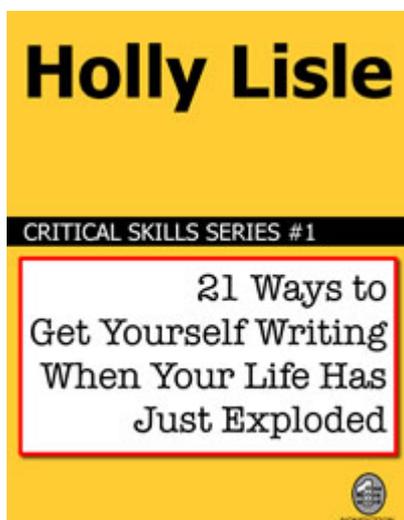
written by Holly

April 28, 2008

By Holly Lisle

So. Heard from Air Force Kid, and he's okay. That's my huge news.

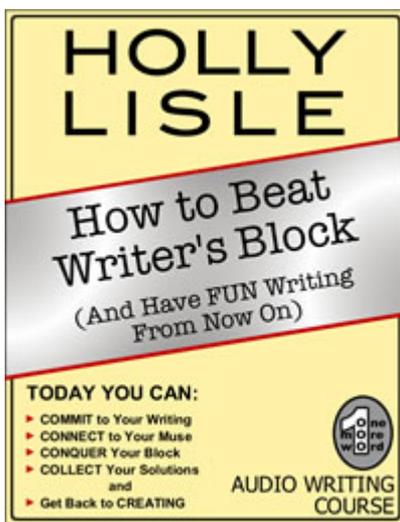
Big news is, the store is back up and running, and has two new goodies.



The small one is **21 Ways to Get Yourself**

**Writing When Your Life Has Just Exploded**, which I wrote in response to a friend who was beta testing the writer's block course, but was trying to write after just coming off a couple years of major life upheavals. This is an area where I have lots of practice. I realized that a series of instantly usable solutions to specific writing questions would probably be useful, so this is the first in the CRITICAL SKILLS SERIES.

The next one will probably be **7 Steps to Getting the Book Written When You Have A Job, A Life, Kids, Three Pets, and You Want to Sleep AND Eat, Too.**



And the final version of **How To Beat Writer's Block (And Have FUN Writing From Now On)** is available now, too. It includes **21 Ways**, and has gotten some terrific feedback from the beta testers (some of which I've included on the page.)

And now, because I've been working 14-hour day for the past two weeks, and more than that the past two days, I'm going to go sack out on the couch and take a nap.

Off tomorrow, back to writing **Moon & Sun II** on Wednesday.

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# Heard from the AFK

written by Holly  
April 28, 2008  
By Holly Lisle

The Air Force Kid left for the Middle East yesterday. Got a call from him—he's arrived safely, and is inprocessing.

My nine-month-countdown until he's due back in the states starts now. I know it will probably be longer. I'm just hoping it won't be much longer.

In the meantime, he's with good people.

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# Something worth watching

written by Holly  
April 28, 2008  
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I found this on J.W.Johnson's website. The Air Force Kid is going to Iraq in a couple of weeks, for nine months. The following YouTube presentation was an important reminder for me, and, I think, for everyone. I hope you'll watch.

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# I'm writing

written by Holly

April 28, 2008

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Less than five hours of sleep (*again*), but the story pulled me in.

The Air Force Kid is on leave, and going to be here later today to visit for a few days, before he goes to hang out with his sister, and then travels some more to see friends all the way on the other side of the country. Then, of course, he ships out for a minimum of nine months to one of the places in the world you least want your kid to be.

I'm trying not to think about that. Taandu monsters and unlighted caverns and trouble that finds two hiding girls are easier things.

I won't be posting again until Wednesday or Thursday. Taking some time off to spend with the Kid.

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# Mini-HAWKSPAR update and more.

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Basically, the news is, there is no news. The book's been moved back in the schedule to June, 2008, but what we do from there is still up in the air.

I'm exhausted. I can't stand even thinking about the book anymore. It is, I think, the best story I've ever told, and I can't bear to look at it.

I sat down and figured out my options. They are:

- It comes out at full length in one volume, prohibitively priced. It barely sells. I lose.
- It comes fifty-five thousand words shorter, not the story I wanted to tell at all, gutted, either by me or by someone else. Whether it sells or not at that length, it isn't the book I wrote, nor does it resemble the book I wanted it to be. I lose.
- It comes out in two volumes, causing readers to pay twice to read one story. The books sells poorly, because the two-book gimmick is a death knell. EVERYBODY—readers, publisher, AND me—loses.
- There is, as far as I can see, no fourth option.

My editors are all on vacation through the weekend, so I'm going to take a few days off to knit, spend time with my youngest, and breathe.

Air Force Kid got a date on shipping out. September. Not sure whether it will be Iraq or Afghanistan. He'll be gone for nine months, and in harm's way. This is a far bigger deal than the book. So my objective is to just deal with the fucking book, and keep my priorities straight.

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# Hitting the push

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Writingwise, Thursday and Friday were no-go's, and the weekend too. We spent all night up on Thursday watching the storm coming, getting tornado warnings, with our eyes glued to local radar on the computer. Around 3 AM, we had a couple of storm cells about twenty miles south of us that had produced circular winds with visible eyes, and we weren't sure they wouldn't spin off tornadoes in our direction—we'd already heard there were tornadoes on the ground. Rough night; did not lead to any sort of writing that day. Friday, the Air Force kid and I talked about him going to Iraq—he's in his bucket (military term), so we know that's going to happen now. We talked about him getting in gear and doing the writing he's been wanting to do. He has something to write about now.

We spent Saturday with them, and Sunday did the household shopping essentials. So here I am, before dawn on Monday, facing the scene that stymied me on Wednesday. I'm having to cut and rewrite as I go; I don't think I'll have anything at all left of the original scene. Now I'm short two days on the **Ruby Key** schedule, too, so I have to make up time.

At least I've spent the last four days thinking about what had to change and what has to go. I have a stack of 3x5 index cards in various colors, and I'm going through marking scenes the way I did with Hawkspar line-for-scene. This is a much shorter project, but I'm feeling the squeeze and that need to get this thing under control now. The colored-index-card line-for-scene will give me that.

I have light on the horizon. Going to get this done.

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## Pages finished

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I'm on page 63, love what I got, brain is frazzled. So I'm going to take a short break, put together the **Create A Plot** cover, and come back to this when my eyes aren't crossed and see if I can get another set of pages done. The Air Force Kid and his wife are coming for a visit for a couple of days, and it would be nice to have the time off for visiting.

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