

To manuscript page 228 on the type-in

written by Holly
August 1, 2022
By Holly Lisle

Today was tough. I had a LOT of hand-written stuff that had to be typed in, and a number of existing pages that had to be either heavily re-written or deleted entirely.

Writing-wise, it was a good day, in that I love this story and the way all the pieces are coming together. But it was a LOT of work.

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So today I start the type-in of the Ohio 2 Revision

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I was up at six, (when you're fasting, it's weirdly easy to roll out of bed at the crack of dawn and be through the shower, done with the first cup of coffee, before seven AM... and at my desk and finished with necessary work emails and the one help desk ticket only I could do not long after that.

So now I'm on to Ohio Two... The TYPE IN.

I open the manuscript, I drag the big-ass pile of paper over to my right, look at my three big URGENT!!! sticky notes tacked to the right side of my computer screen (the one about Derovi, the one about the absolutely necessary weapons change, and the one about the Hosho) and I get ready to write.

By writing the five novels back-to-back-to-back without going back to re-read the previous books, I've done some interesting things.

- I changed both world and story physics as I got a better feel for how to set hard limitations on the magic
- I had better ideas that I leapt into the middle of that now must have some antecedents built up front
- I created some characters at the end who now need to be worked into the beginning (or at least into books two and three)
- And, working my way through from the beginning now, I did one thing at the end of Book Five that I'm probably going to have to smash with a hammer. Or at least give a MUCH better reason for its existence.

All of this is standard shit for any revision. It's just that I've never revised five novels back to back before with none yet in print (meaning I have the FREEDOM to change stuff at the beginning, and am not stuck with worldbuilding that I regret locking me into story physics that was too unlimited and too open).

The best thing any novelist can do to get good, tight stories is to build good, tight limitations into the worldbuilding.

If anything can happen, nothing matters.

If just about everything is impossible, you can get your character embedded deeply in the swamp with the quicksand, the alligators, the poisonous snakes, and the half-starved, injured panther with a taste for human flesh, and have helluva lot of fun making your character work for his escape.

THAT's what I'm doing today. (None of the stuff includes South Florida swamps or wildlife, though. This is all Pure Ohio™.)

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FINISHED BOOK FIVE OF THE OHIO SERIES!!!

written by Holly
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No, I didn't plan this. I thought I had another three weeks of writing to hit the end.

Yesterday, I was galloping along, and I'd planned to pick up today with the logical continuation of the scene I wrote yesterday, where my characters were in trouble...

And when I loped back into the office this morning to pick up where I left off, brain said, "Here, little writer. Here you go... have this spiffy bait..."

And I followed along, and the scene did not go where I expected. It went someplace so much better, and surprised me, and made me laugh...

And all of a sudden, in 2,000-ish words, the ending was right there. And it was the RIGHT ending.

So now I'm taking the weekend off.

I have five novels.

I've already read and revised the first one. The other four have been sitting on my hard drive, waiting for me to finish the first drafts so I can revise them all at once, and make sure I'm consistent with the changes I make...

Which means re-reading Book One before I do anything else, and then working off of that as I do four back-to-back revisions.

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Mwah-ha-ha-ha-HA! Evil is afoot, and fun is right on its tail!

written by Holly

August 1, 2022

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Boy, today did not go where I thought it would. ***Not at ALL.***

In the back of my mind, I had this fun little scene planned, and when I popped out of the shower, I knew pretty much where I was going to start.

And I did start there – but absolutely none of the characters in the scene did what I expected, and the twist they threw at me was so wicked, and so perfect, that I ran with it, just to see what the hell the little buggers were going to do next.

Following them turned out to be the right choice, because I'm now deeply enmeshed in evil intentions and terrible plots and a horrible plan...

And tomorrow, I get to deal with that. And the beauty part is that none of this is coming at me out of left field. It all fits, it's all tightly enmeshed with things that happened in the previous four books, it is the logical outcome of what really happened in yesterday's scene, and while I need to quit now because I got my words and I have other stuff I have to do... Well, tomorrow I have the fun of rolling out onto the page EXACTLY how the shit goes down.

Because the shit is gonna go down.

God, I love this job.

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“Something wicked...” might be me!

written by Holly

August 1, 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, 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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Doing a Line-for-Scene re-plot of Book 5 from Chapter 7 to Chapter 30

written by Holly

August 1, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I got 281 words, and am up to 18,423 total, and was rolling along pretty nicely.

Hit the end of Chapter 5, rolled over to Chapter 5, and found stuff written clear through Chapter 8 that I'll either have to save or delete. But I also discovered that the book I've been writing since the Cave is different by a lot (and better by a lot) than the story I'd been telling up to that point.

So now I have to pull out my Book 5 Line-for-Scene outline, see if there's anything in it I can save, and re-plot from there. I have another hour and change to work on this before I have to move over to writing-school-upgrade stuff.

So there aren't going to be anymore words today, and tomorrow might have a terrific word slaughter pending...

But I'm going to see how cleverly non-destructive I can be in working in what I've already written. (THIS USUALLY GOES BADLY.)

Either way, none of the rest of the words I'll do today will count. They'll all be line-for-scene outlining and rethinking.

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Desktop Curtain, from Many Tricks: My single favorite Mac app

written by Holly
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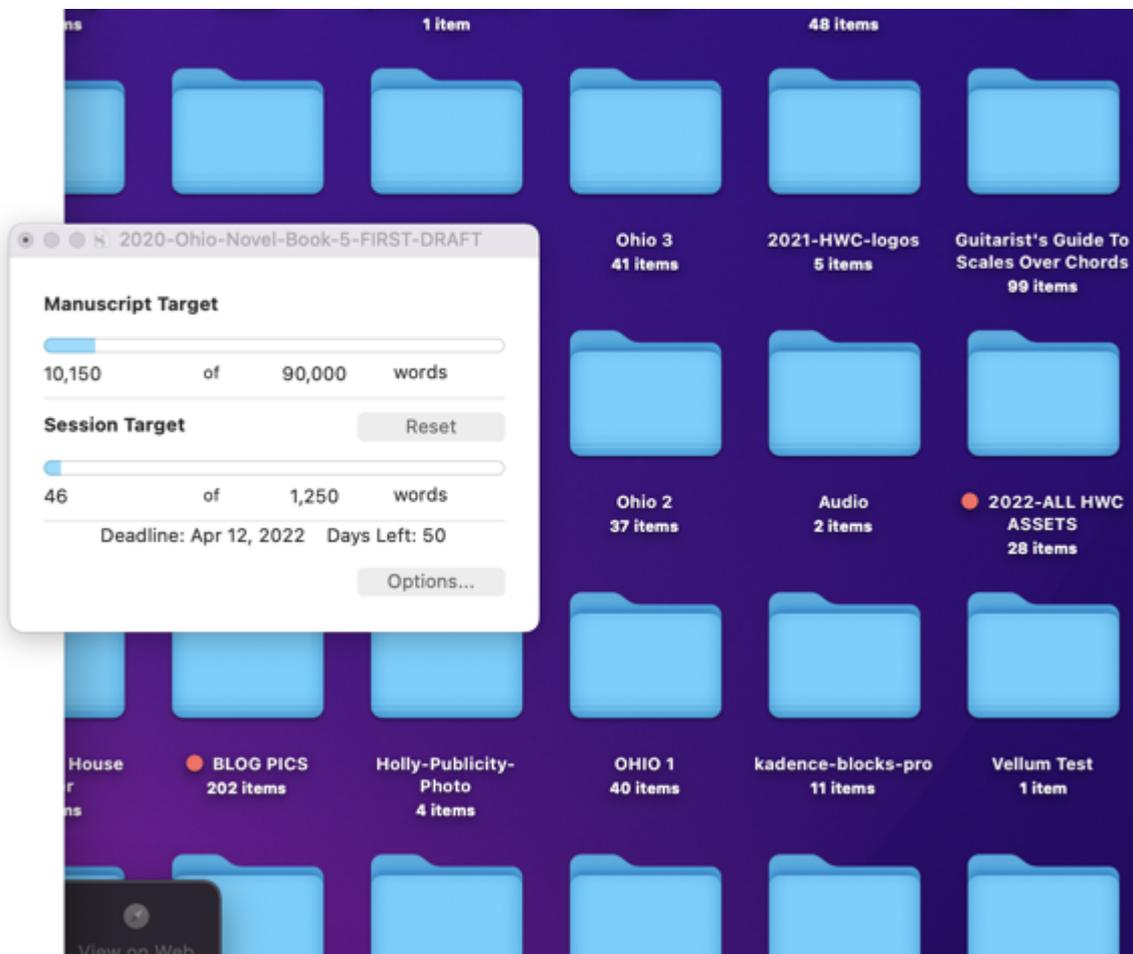
By Holly Lisle

Big fan that I am of GSD (getting shit done), I've found things over the years that have made GSD easier.

The screenshots below are Before and After on a TINY section of my very large desktop this morning. The white bar on the left isn't neatness. It's Scrivener below a 30-word PACTS Sentence that would give some massive spoilers on Book 5.

So...

HERE'S BEFORE...



And keep in mind this is a tiny section of a very large desktop screen, and that most of the right side of it is covered with folders.

Okay. NOW...

Here's AFTER one simple click...



Beautiful, right? Calm, soothing, beautifully damned invisible. It's like a massage for your brain.

I'm not an affiliate for the software or anything. I just love it – and this morning, starting in stressed about the upcoming HollysWritingClasses.com site overhaul, and the upcoming class debugs, and getting Ohio Five done so I can then do the <shudder> five-novel, 470,000+ word One-Pass Revision...

I felt that moment of peace as my chosen blue covered all the crap on my desk, and I wanted to say thanks to Many Tricks [NOT AN AFFILIATE LINK] for my favorite focus-to-get-shit-done app for the Mac.

Now... back to the words. I'm doing *mean* things to my characters today.

Big surprise, right?

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6:47 AM – Finishing Ohio 4, starting Ohio 5, while building the new HollysWritingClasses.com site

written by Holly
August 1, 2022
By Holly Lisle

SO...

My website over on HollysWritingClasses.com is undergoing a **massive** overhaul (complete site rebuild).

And I anticipated the process taking FOUR months.

Turns out... it's probably not anything like that.

My amazing community moderators over there have ***already finished building all the classrooms*** in the new software, and getting all the class materials into them – a process I'd expected to take about **two months**. That means that all the lessons, all the downloads, all the videos, all the EVERYTHING... are done.

Except for the lesson timers (the things that make a new lesson show up each week for the writer taking the class), which I have to go in and do manually.

Turns out, that takes about ten seconds a lesson, and all the lessons are (for the person building the class), on the same

page, so you can just go through and check a box and put in a number and it takes a couple seconds if you're being careful.

So, timers are a non-issue. I have to do them, but they won't slow anything down. That's what I'm going to do today on all the classes... and I anticipate having all the classes done today... even if I have to duplicate the BIG classes to offer the slower-pace/smaller monthly price one-lesson-every-OTHER-week option.

I'd figured another two months for my two database guys to figure out how to move all the existing members and all their existing classes into the NEW database, while I built the front end – the sales pages for the classes, for us to test the new classroom with the new, beautiful, professional, already integrated shopping cart.

And it very well might take us that long.

But since the software we're using has built-in professional integration with the shopping cart we're using... probably not.

Moving ever single writer who ever bought a class (and who therefore still owns it) into the new database might in fact take two months.

But I'm going to say odds are pretty slim that anything else will.

So I'm saying BEST CASE, we could be on the new software and live on December 8th (one month from now).

I'm saying that the **Reasonable Assumption** is that we'll be moving everyone and everything to the new site (and the new site to HollysWritingClasses.com) around the New Year.

I'm excited. There are a lot of things I'll be able to do on the new software that I cannot do on the old software... but that's a post for another time.

Right now... I'm heading in to write the ending of Ohio 4 novel. Yep. LAST SCENE. And I know what I want to have in it.

Tomorrow, I'll start outlining Ohio 5.

Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates, and when these books go on sale, *get invited to the launch.*

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Ya gotta love an evil plan...

written by Holly

August 1, 2022

By Holly Lisle

...And in Book 4 of the Ohio Series, way toward the end, (where I only have about 14,000 words left to finish the damn thing...

The Evil Plan just crawled out of the woodwork.

Not just for my characters.

FOR.

ME.

I'm at roughly seventy-six thousand words in the FOURTH book of the series, with only one more book to go to wrap SERIES ONE...

And NOW the monsters let me know what they're up to?!

NOW?!

Yep. Apparently now. It's way better than anything I could have planned, because it so much meaner than anything I *would* have planned, and so much BIGGER, and so... horrible.

And while I know my brain does this shit all the time, and while I know that no matter what I've planned, my subconscious mind is going to be actively working to make all of that feel too stale and too small when it hits me with its next bit of better...

It's still always a shock when it happens.

So. Today was... AWESOME!

And even more so because there's not a single thing that landed on my head today that's going to have to be retrofitted into the nearly 400,000 words I've already done.

I'm all about the HAPPY DANCE today, lemme tell you.

Now, I'm off to work on the **HollysWritingClasses.com** replacement website for the next four or five hours. Wish me luck.

[And for my writing students following this blog, I'm not going to flog the current class discounts via email. I am going to say here that prices on the classes are going to return to normal as soon as the new version of the site goes live. And that is going to be AS SOON AS WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN, BECAUSE our old software is now way too creaky and old to keep using.]

Anyway... Have a wonderful weekend, and I'll see you in here next Monday.

It went CLICK like a well-oiled machine.

Things are going to get deadly again.

But the character who switched teams on me this week is going to make the rest of the week's writing a blast.



1296 words today (and I fixed the damn "working hours" timer in Scrivener early today so that it didn't eat them on me again when it took me a really long time to get them)... and 72,229 total.

And there's a happy dance going on over here, let me tell you.

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