

Something unplanned... and I can't wait to find out what happens next!

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

There's been this small, ongoing mystery in these books since Book One. And I don't mean a mystery for the reader.

I mean a mystery for me.

I built this one set (a set in fiction is a place you use frequently that contains important secrets and other elements your characters need to use to get through the story)...

And today, my main character stepped into the set and the last key piece of that set became available to her.

I didn't know this was going to happen. I sent her in there for something else, but fingers and back brain collaborated against me, and BAM!

She and I saw the change in the set at exactly the same time, and AFTER I'd already gotten my words for the day.

I have NO CLUE what's there.

I have NO CLUE why it matters, or what's going to happen tomorrow.

She has been working her way through her past and the present trying to learn a damn difficult job while dealing with pieces of her past that are missing, or were lies all along.

And now this... thing... is suddenly accessible to her, and I'd already run long getting to it.

So tomorrow I'm going to find out what's there, and maybe start understanding why it opened up to her now, and maybe figure out how the hellacious problem she's trying to resolve is related to that piece of the set suddenly opening up...

Tomorrow is going to be really damn interesting.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Fun with Consequences. 1308 words while making trouble for my main character. 45,406 total.

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

This was one of those “I love my job” days.

I got a late start because we were dropping presents off at a friend's house, but when I picked up where I left off yesterday, the parts of the scene I needed were waiting.

Actions of others have had massive, epic consequences, and something that's been mostly stable for a really, really long time just got broken.

My MC is in the position where she's having to sort out the pieces.

And she's facing one of those moments that would make heroes

in capes and professional politicians all weep.

She's not feeling so great herself. But she's doing her best, and while her upcoming month is likely to be five kinds of nightmare...

It's gonna be a LOT of fun to write.

I'm happy. I love what I got, I've left myself in a good place to pick up work again on Monday... and WEEKEND!!!

I'm ready.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

**Oh, such wicked fun today!
1257 words, and 44,099 total.**

written by Holly
May 23, 2022
By Holly Lisle

I have only the vaguest idea of where the story is going right now. I'm a long way off of the planned outline, writing into the dark, following the conflict, and asking always, "What could go wrong?"

"What could go wrong?" is the right question for this section, for this book, for the aftermath of the resolution of one enormous problem I came up with over the past week or so... and for the whole slew of problems that resolution has created.

I love this story, these characters, this world... and I am fascinated by what's going on now. And because I don't know

what's going to happen next, it makes going in to work each morning really damn easy.

Because I get to let my fingers put words to page, and I get to find out.

I don't usually write this way. I usually have a line-for-scene outline built, and while I get spontaneous material and outright surprises writing that way, everything more or less fits within what I planned.

This... doesn't.

This is something that happened that... well... took me completely by surprise, changed the nature of the story universe I've built, and makes what happens next wildly important.

And while I can definitely bring the series to a permanent close in this novel, what happened with my characters over this least week does would make it really easy to write a whole lot of future novels in the same world.

Gut says I want to do that. Gut says that this world is a world worth staying in for as many books as I can make time for. Because this world keeps surprising me, catching me off guard, throwing challenges at me that I have to solve, and pushing me to think outside of boxes and systems to solve them.

A helluva lot of years into this gig, I'm still finding new ways to do things.

That as much as the stories I get to write is the thing that keeps this job delightful, and enchanting. And just really damn fun.

And that my Ohio world is pushing me into so many corners and forcing me to fight my way out of them is what makes THIS world worth writing in for a lot more than the four novels I've already written and the fifth one that I'm now halfway

through.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Uphill run on Ohio 5, but ended with 1209 keeper words for the day.

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I don't usually start with a lot of backing and filling. I read what I wrote the day before, and then I pick up from there and start writing.

Today, though, when I started writing the first time, it went wrong on me.

I had a vague idea what I wanted, and the only thing I really knew that what I was getting was that it WAS NOT that.

So... I figured out what I did want, and counter to what I generally recommend, I then went back and started over. (Fresh chapter, new page – it was pretty easy to delete and move on.)

And I came out of it with 1209 words I'm happy with.

And left myself in a good place to pick up tomorrow.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Wow! 1412 words, two hours... And LIGHTNING struck! (Or... “Am I making a huge mistake?”)

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I'd written myself into a corner yesterday, and I had absolutely no clue what was going to happen next.

See... Brain writes the outlines and the overall planning. Gut, however, writes the words, and Gut – like a willful horse – is entirely capable of getting the bit between his teeth and galloping straight toward whatever suddenly looks good.

Over the last few days (my time, not hers) my main character has experienced an appalling revelation, a near-death experience, and an unexpected triumph combined with a terrible loss...

And I thought she was still heading toward the same basic end-story objective, but getting there by some strange side paths.

I was still having to get there by pure pantsing, because I left my line-for-scene outline a couple chapters ago in pursuit of The Better Idea.

But today I found myself staring at a wall where I realized I'd just caused the utter obliteration of the ending I thought I was going to write.

Brain was muttering...

"Right... That thing you blew up yesterday was supposed to be the heart of your conflict for another five books after this five, and now... BLAMMO? You sure you want to save what you did yesterday? You can go back. Back is SAFE. Back in KNOWN. Back is the PLAN... and you liked the PLAN when you wrote it."

Gut held firm. Gut said, *"Don't be a chicken. You knew yesterday's stuff was cool when you wrote it, and now you want to wuss out and go with what's safe? C'mon! Grow a pair!"*

Small side note here while I point out that my gut is kind of a jerk sometimes... but it's almost always right about the fiction, so I have learned to look past the taunting to the meat of the argument.

Which is that what I got yesterday was really cool. Gut is absolutely right about that.

It isn't what I planned, but it's better than what I'd planned. It isn't Safe. But Safe in fiction, the Known in fiction, the Expected in fiction... are always okay.

They are NEVER fucking amazing.

And today I had to look at the loss of some words to return to the Safe Known. Or to keep moving forward in pursuit of the hope of bringing home something fucking amazing...

With the acknowledged very real possibility that I will fall on my face, absolutely wreck this story, and then have a gruelling, long slog through it when I go back through to do the One-Pass Five Book Revision <shudder> that waits for me at the end of this process. Where I will end up turning it into the book I'd planned to write.

I'm choosing to chase the chance to make this fucking amazing.

This may be a serious tactical error on my part, and if you

find me in here next month muttering, “Yep... should have got back to the outline...”

Then...

You’re invited to say, “Well, I thought you were nuts when you veered away from your plan into fresh new territory.”

Not yet, though. Let’s see where this goes.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

Monday... Arg! But got words, and managed to get some momentum...

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

Not bad for a Monday. I mostly like the words I got – and the ones I don’t like can sit there and think about what they’ve done until I come back around for the revision.

877 for the day, 40,225 total for the book, and I did manage to get a piece of one mystery in there, and I left myself in a good spot to pick up tomorrow.

So now...

Laundry.

And then the other Activities of Daily Living that get us all

from today to tomorrow... when I shall write again. ☐

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved

A second day of uphill – but progress uphill is still progress

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I'm at the midpoint of Ohio 5, the stakes are high, my MC has just discovered for the first time in the series HOW high... and, to rearrange some Rush lyrics that THEY borrowed, I've just discovered, from John Barth's *The Tidewater Tales*,

My characters will pay the price, but they will not count the cost.

I'd love to write further on the book, but today has not been easy, and brought with it both cause for a headache and the headache that followed.

So I'm going to take my 701 words, and my nearly 40,000 total, and say "good enough."

And disappear for the weekend, where I will play video games, and read books, and nap on the couch if the mood strikes me.

And Monday I'll come back, bringing new words to the story.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights

Not a GREAT day... but I did get some keeper words

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I don't know if it's just me, but sometimes after I have a couple days where the writing just flies, and I love everything that hits the page, I have a day like this one, where it's pretty much like wading like knee-deep mud, and having it steal one shoe and not give it back.

(Ohio has mud that will do this. I suspect most places don't.)

I got words, and I like the words I got.

But there was no magic to it.

I also know that by the time I hit my read-through before I do the revision, I am incapable of telling the difference between the words I write when everything is rainbows and bunnies, and the words I write where it's uphill both ways.

So tomorrow I'll sit down again, and get more words. And they'll fly, or they won't. But they, like today's words, will move me closer to my goal.

So...

Onward!

Hoo, BOY!!! 1356 words, and the conclusion to my favorite scene in the book so far!

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I have 38,397 words in a novel that I'm thinking will need 90,000 to be finished.

Today's scene was actually the midpoint scene of the novel – the point where everything changes.

So it's not in the right place, and to get it to fit the book and be in the right spot, I'm going to have to drag it to the midpoint, and then build out the events that lead up to it.

I'm okay working like this. Scrivener is, in fact, designed so I CAN work like this. What I'll have to do is write several new thirty-word scene Sentences, drag them to the correct spots, and then go back and write the couple of disasters that took us to this point.

But today, like yesterday, the words flew, and while I had no clue what I was going to write until I wrote it, it fit, and it moved me, and I love what I got.

Days like this are pretty rare. I'm thrilled that I had two of them in a row.

1250 Words on Ohio Five... and making myself cry. A LOT...

written by Holly

May 23, 2022

By Holly Lisle

I had no idea the events I wrote today were going to happen.

None. What I had planned was entirely different, and pretty good. But this was...

So...

Much...

Better...

My eyes are red, I've had to stop several times to go walk around in the kitchen and mutter to myself, and here's the thing. *Today's stuff is not the whole of what's going to happen.*

I stopped with 1250 words because it just happened to end the first part of the scene.

Tomorrow, when I pick this back up, I'll write the SECOND twist that I didn't see coming.

And I guarantee you that I'm not going to make it dry-eyed through tomorrow's writing, either.

I love this so much. I hate crying, but this part of the story surprised me, reached out and grabbed me, and made me love my

characters so much more than I already did.

Done for the day, though.

I'll be back tomorrow, and I'll bring more words.

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved