

# On Ohio, and the novels, and the new class

written by Holly

October 16, 2023

By Holly Lisle

Just small news here. The new class is finished in first draft, and I'm now (and for the first time ever) doing the complete course bug-hunt and clean-up BEFORE I put the course on sale.

Yes, it will take longer. But it will also guarantee that the class will be less first-time-through splintery.

I'm still working on the Ohio novels every weekday. Read-throughs and clean-ups at the moment.

I bought a wood-burning kit to use so that I can make a real-world version of one of the magical artifacts in the novels. The kit finally arrived, so I can start putting that together.

So now, I'll have a little fun making one of my main character's best magical tools. (Well, in HER Ohio, it's actually magical. In MY Ohio, it's going to be cool, and attractive to look at, and possibly to some degree useful – but probably not to the degree my MC is finding it useful.)

And finally, I know it's autumn (and heading hard toward winter) but I just wanted to show of Ohio's state wildflower, the trillium. The hills are covered with them in spring, and it's a gorgeous sight.

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# Finished Lesson 8 of the new (name withheld) Fiction Writing Course

written by Holly  
October 16, 2023  
By Holly Lisle

Got over 2000 words today. I am pushing hard on this class,  
and looking forward to:

- A) Finishing all the lessons... and
- B) Putting the class on sale

I needed to get some distance from the Ohio novels, so I can  
read back through the books I already have, and take a look at  
a couple of conflicting story ideas that I realized I was  
pursuing simultaneously.

Writing nonfiction moves me out of that world for a while,  
lets me get cold on the writing, and allows me to see where  
I've made mistakes or pursued wrong (or spectacularly right)  
directions.

Since I've done at least two takes on most of the five planned  
novels (and possible sixth)... I very much want to have the  
necessary distance when I read through what I have this time.

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Updates, and when these books go on sale, *get invited to the  
launch.***

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# **YESTERDAY's work... finished Lesson 5 of the new Big Writing Course...**

written by Holly

October 16, 2023

By Holly Lisle

Got my fiction first TODAY – had to toss a bit of the most recent scene, came in with new words, and even came out a bit ahead. Came out with a net gain of 148 words. Not what I'd hoped for, but I'm glad to be getting fiction. And the RETHINK part of the scene was essential.

I'm going to also include what I got yesterday, which was nonfiction for the new Big Class.

I'm happy with the way the processes I'm demonstrating are coming together.

And while today's is a subject that I've had to cover in every single writing class I've done, I've had to do that because it's useful to every writer (fiction and nonfiction), and it isn't a one-time process. You do it in some form with every single piece of fiction you write.

Every writing project benefits from this, and how you do it is different for every kind of fiction you write.

So... The lesson is done. Five out of twenty-three planned.

Still no idea on what the Bonus will be. Just that there will be one.

If you have a question about fiction writing (or writing in general) that I haven't covered, just reply to this post, and ask. And I'll read through any replies, and see if anyone asks something I haven't covered before.

If I can figure out a one-to-three-lesson bonus class from YOUR question, you'll receive a nice reward as thanks for the question.

**FICTION WRITERS! Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips**

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## Secret Big Class: Day 2

written by Holly  
October 16, 2023  
By Holly Lisle

Today's objective was 1000 words on Ohio 4, and both starting and finishing Secret Writing Class Worksheet #1.

It always amazes me how much harder it is to build a worksheet than to write the actual lesson it supports.

**It also amazes me that I forget this fact.** I decided to do the worksheet before my fiction today, because "It's just the worksheet, and I know what my writers have to be able to do... I can put that out in half an hour, maybe an hour tops..."

And I thought this because it's been a while since I've built any worksheets... and I FORGOT how difficult it is to build a good worksheet that walks someone through a complex process a step at a time.

So... I did not finish the worksheet.

I'm maybe 25% through it.

Which meant that I did not get any words on the Ohio Novel today... because I did the worksheet first, and the worksheet is kicking my ass.

I made **good progress** on the worksheet.

I'm hoping to be able to finish it tomorrow.

BUT EVEN IF I DON'T, tomorrow I'm not working on it until AFTER I get my words on Ohio 4.

**Live. Learn. REMEMBER what you learn.**

My motto for the rest of this time when I'm writing a novel and building a class.

**Want to be invited to the secret Big Course launch?**

And get updates on how it's coming along, and how close I am to taking it live? (It's closer than you think...)

□

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# Tuesday: 1080, and a nice bit of twisting things

written by Holly

October 16, 2023

By Holly Lisle

I'm pleased with today's words. I got to go deeper on one important series character, and I managed to frustrate my MC with this guy at the same time that I got to know him better.

Always fun.

Going to work for a while now on the OTHER PROJECT, which is nonfiction, and which shall not be named.

**But I'm getting close to the halfway point on OHIO 4...** and still getting good things about the creepy goings on in my little town, and the fact that so many people are so happily and obliviously embracing all the creepy as a "gee, isn't this wonderful, and how do we get more of it?"

Left myself at a fun point for diving back in tomorrow, too.

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# To quote Meatloaf, “Some days it don’t come easy...”

written by Holly  
October 16, 2023  
By Holly Lisle

It *is* a Monday.

I’m trying to be objective by keeping that in mind.

Mondays can be a bit tricky sometimes, and this was one of those.

So... I got words...

They fit, they moved the story forward, they let me build out the obstacle my characters are facing, and I genuinely like what I got.

I just didn’t get as MUCH of it as I wanted...

Turns out, this simply was not one of those “Red Bull Gives You Wings” flying-fingers, galloping plot kinds of days. I’m wrapping up, and hoping that tomorrow, the story will take off for me a bit more smoothly.

Because frankly, the “wings” days are a whole lot more fun.

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# A truly solid writing day today...

written by Holly  
October 16, 2023  
By Holly Lisle

I am grateful for days like this one, when there's a cool breeze blowing in the back window while I write, where I can heard birds singing and the leaves of maples and oaks rustling.

Days like this feed the fiction, because the fictionalized town is a magical version of this town, and the sounds and smells and bits of things going on around me get worked into the story.

Just in tiny pieces. But I think those pieces matter.

I love this place where I live, and I'm so happy to be able to use it as a backdrop for the magic and the danger and the mystery of the stories I'm writing.



I won't be using it by NAME, because the name of my town is WAY long to type ten thousand times.

But I'll make sure to give credit in the novels to the real town that made me love it back when I was nine, and made me love it again when I returned here fifty years later.

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# **Today it was the Joy of Words**

written by Holly  
October 16, 2023  
By Holly Lisle

I love writing in my fantasy small-town Ohio world.

Because while part of it is absolutely deep fantasy with really good magic, part of it is my house, and my street, and my little town right here...

And I love my house, and my street, and my little town, and the folks who live here.

I love the sounds of the place, and the smells. I love the wildflowers (AKA weeds to those in town who are – unlike me – obsessed with Utterly Perfect Lawns).

I came to loathe Utterly Perfect Lawns in South Florida.

I reserve the right to love my wild violets and my dandelions and all the other weedy little flowers in my soft green grass

that give the bees something to make honey with.

And I love being – at long last – home, where it isn't ninety degrees with ninety percent humidity, but a cool and breezy fifty-eight. In June.

And I love writing my crazy magical version of my little town in Ohio, with its hills, and its river, and its wonderful four seasons.

I got the words.

I'm happy.

And now I'm going off to do the other work of the day.

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# Another slow, struggle-y day today working through Chapter 6

written by Holly  
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The story has taken a (planned) dark turn. **MEANWHILE...** I'm struggling a bit to show the conflict without going darker than I want.

And I have to be very, very careful right now NOT to let the magic run amok.

It'll do that, you know – magic will. Run AMOK... AMOK... all over the damn place.

It will start turning pumpkins into carriages and rabbits into Deadly Vorpals, and I don't want to have anything to do with nightmares like that.

So... when I come in tomorrow, I'm going to spend my first writing hour just building out a dialogue for myself on what I want the rest of this book to do.

I have the outline already. I'm following it.

But my tone feels like it's shifted, and I'm not sure I like the direction in which it's slipped. So tomorrow might be another 'small wordcount' day, but if I can guarantee myself that I'm writing in the right direction, I'll be just fine with that.

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# Ohio 4: Not the best word-

# count... 268, and 13,224 total on the first draft

written by Holly

October 16, 2023

By Holly Lisle

Not every writing day is great.

Some days, you find places in your read-through (the thing before the new words) that won't stand as is... and you pull out the bits that went in a direction you've discovered you do not wish to pursue, and you put in new words.

And you get a NET gain...

But it's not the same kind of triumph as racing through the field yelling "WHEEEEEEE!!!" and galloping straight ahead, and getting your full count objective one more time.

So.

The book moved forward today, but not as much as we had hoped.

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