

And about the New Secret Writing Course...

written by Holly
September 18, 2023
By Holly Lisle

I discovered there were two essential lessons I left out.

So I wrote them.

And now THEY'RE done.

Now I'm contemplating some sort of bonus for the course, but in the meantime, I'm going to be setting up the new classroom with the lessons, and getting everything ready to make the course available to students.

The guitar-playing dogs are in one of the lessons, by the way.

And once this thing goes on sale, I am looking desperately forward to getting back to the Ohio novels, and getting those out into the world, too.

HollysWritingClasses.com Member Updates

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A tricky bit to figure out

for tomorrow... BUT done for today.

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Tomorrow my MC has to figure out how to contact (and then rescue) someone important trapped behind enemy lines without breaking the rules that forbid her from having any contact with the enemy.

I already know how she's going to do this. I just need to figure out how to make it smooth, and clean, and coherent.

But today was good – today I put the discovery that this guy exists in front of her.

Word count: 1984 words for the day, 53,496 for the book... and I'm happy with what I got.

Meanwhile, however, with fiction done, I'm going to do more planning on some important nonfiction I'm working out.

And then I'm going to try to get rid of a headache that has been plaguing me on and off ever since winter and spring started duking it out for the Most Annoying Weather crown.

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

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Today was a heavy, brutal rip-through... but I like what I got in the end

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I hit a part of the novel today that I got way, way wrong in first draft. And while I'd estimate that in FACT I wrote close to 2000 words – over a period of three straight hours of hauling ass – what I was left with after ripping out that big first-draft nosedive into concrete was a forward gain of 954 words.

I'm okay with that. This time, the plot outline is clicking, the bad things are happening to characters, not to the plot – and I made myself cry.

When the stuff you're writing digs into YOU, and you find yourself typing through tears as you get to the end of the scene, odds are pretty good that you nailed it. At least in concept, if not perfectly in execution.

The counts: 44,220 words total. The part I get to mark as progress after ripping out most of a two-thousand-ish word first-draft chapter – and then making back the loss and showing a bit of profit at the end – is 954 words.

Works for me.

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A RIDICULOUSLY good Friday – 3927 words, 24,247 total – and wicked joy

written by Holly
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After my main character got to experience the deep joy of finding a true friend yesterday (my time, not hers)... she is now facing the potential of horrible loss.

So I'm sitting here after getting a good run of words that led to a cliffhanger, and I'm a bit teary-eyed over what's just happened (YES, I do in fact sometimes make myself cry when I'm writing) and all of a sudden, I discover that I understand exactly how a couple of weird events I wrote in over the past few days in the story connect...

And from the connection of those events, discover something I did not know about this TOWN she lives in... (a truly thrilling moment from the point of view of a worldbuilder... and I think it will be cool for readers, too...)

And from that discovery about the town, I got both the truth behind the next obstacle my hero faces, and what she's going to have to get through to overcome it.

I got to be so wickedly mean to all my characters this morning... but it's going to come out all right. Not soon. But eventually.

So now I'm going to work for a couple hours on **this surprise thing I'm putting together for my writers**. And then... FRIDAY!!!

Hope you have a great weekend.

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

written by Holly
September 18, 2023
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.

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MINIONS!!! Minions are awesome! And today my main character had some!

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I've run out of time, but I got 899 absolutely wicked words in Ohio 5 today.

My MC has some helpers who today, in her hour of need, turned into minions – and they're about to wreck havoc in her defense.

It was a fun scene, and will be fun to get back to tomorrow morning.

Right now, though, I have to go back to building pricing boxes, and setting up the last bits of the new writing site shop software before the official site re-launch (and the half-price class sale) next Tuesday, April 12.

For writers, the site is still in the same place:
<https://hollyswritingclasses.com>

It's completely different software, it works differently, but it still delivers the writing classes, and still has our forum full of wonderful folks.

If you're a writer (either along with being one of my readers, or not), and you're interested in any of my classes, head over and take a look at the courses I offer.

The half-price relaunch sale has a hard time-limit, but it's a pretty roomy one (ten days).

Hoping to have most of that finished today.

It would be awesome to not have anything I had to do tomorrow, so that I could just write more Ohio 5.

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

written by Holly
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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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**Figured out a spiffy twist...
and got carried away: 1797
words, 50,345 total**

written by Holly
September 18, 2023

By Holly Lisle

Today was a “how are they doing it?” day with the novel, as something that has been going on since before Book One even started is revealed.

And for folks who, like me, watched a LOT of Scooby-Doo as kids, I’ll note that no rubber suits were involved.

This was bloody, and gory, and truly evil... and when my MC discovered it, it revealed an explanation behind the history of the murder of someone who had been her whole world.

I ran long, because when I discovered this morning what had actually happened (it was a complete surprise to me, too) I just couldn’t stop writing.

And it’s just the fact that it’s Friday and I still have stuff on my list to get done that finally got me to put on the brakes.

AWESOME writing day, with a twist I didn’t see coming... and with the set-up now in place for one that I do.

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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Yeah... the streak of Writer

Cruelty (TM) continues

written by Holly

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The words leapt to the page today, my fingers flew, I giggled evilly – and my delightful little town and its bizarre and unpredictable denizens took me deeper into a mess my MC hasn't even fully wrapped her head around yet.

Something big is coming.

Something bad is watching.

And I'm flying toward it through lovely little neighborhoods of fifties Mid-Century Modern homes and sixties bungalows, moving down sidewalks that hold back carefully manicured lawns and 19th Century mansions shaded by centuries-old oaks...

Down to the places in the town that have been around not just for a couple centuries... but for eons.

God, I love this world.

1435 words, and 44,430 total. Really fine day all the way around.

Want to be invited to the launch when these books go live?
Join the invitation list.

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Oh, today was GOOD... main character in deep soup, her dear friend in deadly danger...

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First, though, the words – 1393 out of my 1250 words-per-day objective. 40,171 total. At 45,000, I'll pass the halfway mark on Book Four.

But... oh, boy. I hated having to stop for the day. There's such incredibly bad stuff happening, and this guy my main character loves so much is in horrible trouble.

I got a late start this morning (started at almost eight AM), but it didn't matter, because today everything I set up yesterday just rolled into place. It clicked.

And tomorrow should be fun, because all the moving pieces are going to collide – heroes will meet hell, and monsters will meet mayhem, and while I don't know HOW it's going to work out, that's the fun of this job. I'll set things in motion, follow them through to the end, and get to find out.

So I'm very much looking forward to my Thursday words.

Now, however, on to the rest of the day's work list.

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