

A great writing day, and beating up my main character some more. Big Fun!

By Holly Lisle

I had to do it last of the things on my list, but after writing and sending out a couple of emails today, I set down with the words, fell right into the story, and got 1215. As shown by the picture above, more than I need to hit my deadline, if slightly fewer than the 1250 I generally shoot for.

I love the words I got. My main character is in such big trouble, and her new best friend is about to be involved (next chapter), and this guy I loathed when he showed up in the first book is turning out to be a pretty decent human being underneath it all.

A lot of my old life as an RN is sneaking into this book in tiny bits and pieces.

Which is to say – my main character is having a helluva time. Because she isn't the nurse.

She's the *patient*.

<insert evil laugh here>

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Oh, boy! Hurt my character, wrought vengeance on an evildoer, and made myself laugh... in 1356 words!

By Holly Lisle

Excellent Monday! And how often does anyone get to say that?

I rolled into work this morning (a few hours ago) with my Conflict Sentence in the right corner of Scrivener.

That's Protagonist Versus Antagonist in Setting with Twist in 30 words or less. Today's chapter sentence was twenty-nine words, and was the aftermath of her going out for a run to see if she could get herself hurt.

Seriously.

There was surgery. Projectile vomiting. More surgery. Pain, confusion, fear, and danger... and some wry and kind of snarky commentary from the subject of all this awfulness, my main character – it was funny as hell, fun to write, and I went over my daily word limit again.

I love this book.

I love this world.

And I'm in the final third, hitting deadlines and even getting a bit ahead on them, with three more books to write after this one. And I can't wait.

Well, I can. I have to. But today is what, if you're a writer,

you wish all days were like.

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When a Main Character Trips over a Secret Past – and 1310 words.

By Holly Lisle

You think you know who your main character is by the time you get her more than halfway through Book 2.

More than that, you KNOW she knows who she is.

So today, my MC discovered that an event in her life that she thought had gone down one way did not. And she discovered something about herself, who she was as a kid, and what she did as a kid, that shocked the crap out of her – and me.

It was a beautiful writing day, I LOVE the words I got, and what happened today fits in perfectly with her rocky past, and events that happened in the first book – stuff I didn't even realize I was setting up until all of a sudden it was on the page.

There are times when you go in a direction like this, trusting your gut, and it doesn't work out, and you hate every piece of what you write that day.

This ... Not one of those times.

AWESOME WRITING DAY!

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Wednesday with a lot going on – but rolled past 60,000 words and hit my target anyway

By Holly Lisle

Rough morning... some of it just with the content of this particular scene, which was a pretty dark event from my main character's childhood.

I like what I got, and I got 1,577 words doing it, which continues to move me closer to finishing the first draft of this book early.

I suspect, though, that I might have to soften a bit of what I got during revision.

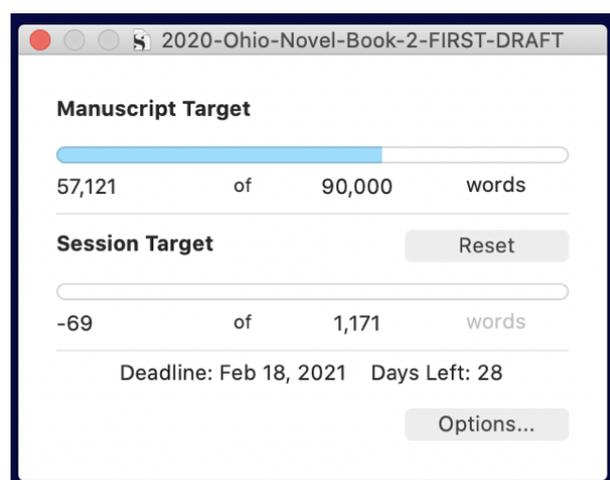
Not tomorrow. I have to get the FIRST DRAFT words done.

But I'll need to keep in mind during the writing of tomorrow's scene the fact that I might have to build in a bit of flexibility regarding what I got today.

Quick Update Because It's Laundry Day: 1786 words, and cool twist!

By Holly Lisle

So here's where I started this morning.



I began with a negative word count because when I read through what I wrote yesterday, some stuff had to go.

Some days the destruction is a LOT worse than this, but I did want to show that when I start in, my negative word counts do show up, I can see them, and I am aware of the price that cutting what I've written can have on hitting my deadlines. Some days the visible negative counts are in the thousands... and the next time I have one of those, I'll try to remember to get a picture.

Just hoping that won't happen again in this book.

And the positive word count does NOT include in my final tally the words I deleted. If it did that, it would give me a false positive – would allow me to think I was closer to my target that I truly am.

But anyway, NAILED the scene today, and came up with a word count well above my objective of 1250. The 1786 net words I got today were fun, and the way the scene ended wasn't something I'd planned.

By the time I hit the end of the scene, however, my wicked Muse had figured out something cool, and it whispered, "How about this?"

It was a true and final solution to the problem of that scene.. though I have no doubt the solution is going to send some wicked repercussions through my story would.

However, it was... perfect.

And I was so happy with its little surprise that I damn near squeaked.

G00000D writing day today.

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Beat the headache. 1278 new words, and a good twist.

By Holly Lisle

First, the headache, because it was the biggest obstacle I faced this morning.

Over the holidays, we did an intentional, planned drift away from keto so that we could have some fun foods. Pies, you know, and cookies, and stuff like baked potatoes and stuffing. We hadn't done this before, but we hadn't dealt with last year, before, either, which sucked... and just for the holidays, we agreed to be a little flexible where food was concerned.

We all three had fun eating. We all three also gained a little weight. Not a lot – we were still doing intermittent fasting – which for us is generally one meal a day, or, if you're figuring in ratios, 1:23. One hour in which we eat, twenty-three in which we don't.

We also widened our ratios, to about 6:18, which is still about as wide as we care to go.

Back to the headache. When you return to keto, you get a headache. I'm going to be able to count on this one for a good week before my body readjusts and it goes away.

Was it worth it?

Dunno. Ask me in a week, by which time the headache should wear off.

But throbbing, banging head pain aside, I did get 1278 words today that I really like, while cleaning up and adding to the scene I started last Friday.

I've met some new bad guys. My main character finds the smaller one adorable and truly compelling, and is not having the easiest time in the world seeing him as a "not someone I should love". There are reasons for this beyond the fact that that my delightful villain is someone most human beings would want to take home and be friends with forever.

The bigger bad guy is NOT anything like the little one. But

might have some good surprises for me as I keep writing.

Writing the conflict in the scene today, and figuring out what was truly going on as I wrote it, was a blast.

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Oh, BOY! Good, good, writing day today.

By Holly Lisle

So... this morning I got my favorite line so far in the Ohio #2 novel.

It's subject to change during revision, of course, or outright deletion if I come up with something better, but right now it's this.

If you can catch them, you can eat them.

Can't throw in the context, except to note that an attempt at nasty negotiations by the bad guys did not work out as well as they'd hoped.

And I got a full start-to-finish scene I love, words I'm very happy with, I went over my stay-on-deadline wordcount of 1191 words by 479 words – and I still have time left over to get the rest of today's work done.

It has so far been pretty much the perfect Friday.

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A good and angry Tuesday – the novel’s midpoint conflict comes to life

By Holly Lisle

Was at work by nine (I slept in a little) and just finished my words. Goal is always 1250, and I got 1412 – so I came out a little ahead.

If you look at my screen shot of the word counter, you can see that I could have quit at 1242 and still stayed on deadline today.

I didn’t because today’s words, while they took pretty much the whole three hours allotted, weren’t hard to find.

If I have a number of days like that, my required words to hit my deadline could end up going under a thousand.

HOWEVER...

I’ll still work to hit 1250 words or better every day because...

You always have THOSE days, where you end up ripping out more than you write, where you can’t think, where you can’t make the story come together.

If I don’t have any days like that, I’ll finish Ohio #2 early (before my scheduled Feb.18), and start outlining the first draft of Ohio #3.

If I do have some of THOSE days, however, I’ll stand a much better chance of not falling behind.

As for what I got today...

This woman I met in the story yesterday who was winding up to be a real “spoke in the wheel, monkey-wrench in the works” about her involvement in my main character’s job in this small town calmed down a tiny bit today. I don’t yet know whether my MC has managed to win her over or not. **MRS. X** might still walk and take other folks my MC needs with her.

But she isn’t going to succeed in destroying the whole wonderful thing my MC is involved in. So for me, that felt like a pretty big win.

* * *

And today I remembered to reset my Ko-Fi account for January, 2021, and put up my new notice. If you’re interested, you can see what I’m doing with Ko-Fi... and why... below.

Ko-Fi pays me to write fiction for 3 hours per day, 5 days a week: <https://ko-fi.com/hollylisle>

Sometimes I work longer than that. But that’s on me.

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Resetting my Ohio #2 deadline... Because “holidays and weekends” are a real

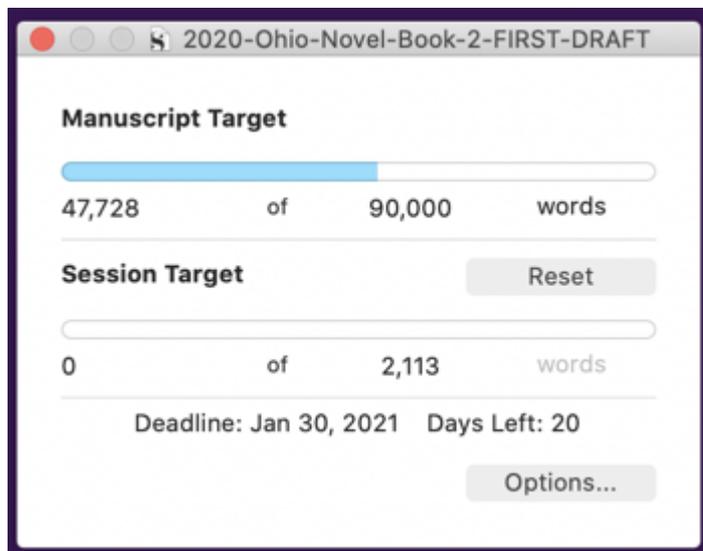
thing. And so's math.

By Holly Lisle

I had to redo my schedule. I forgot about holidays, about taking time off – and I also forgot to figure weekends – and the fact that I don't write on them – into my schedule.

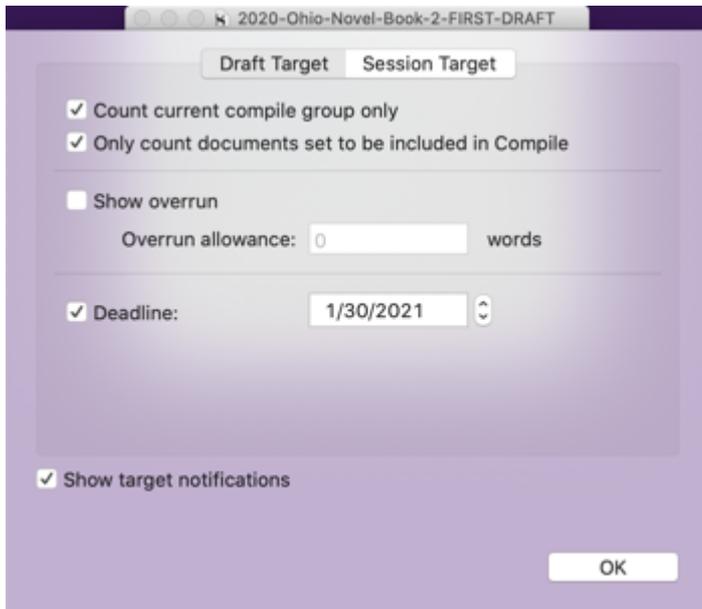
To hit my deadline date, I would have ended up trying to hit 2500 words a day, and I'm not there yet.

The image below, with 2113 words due today, is what I saw when I opened up Scrivener this morning.

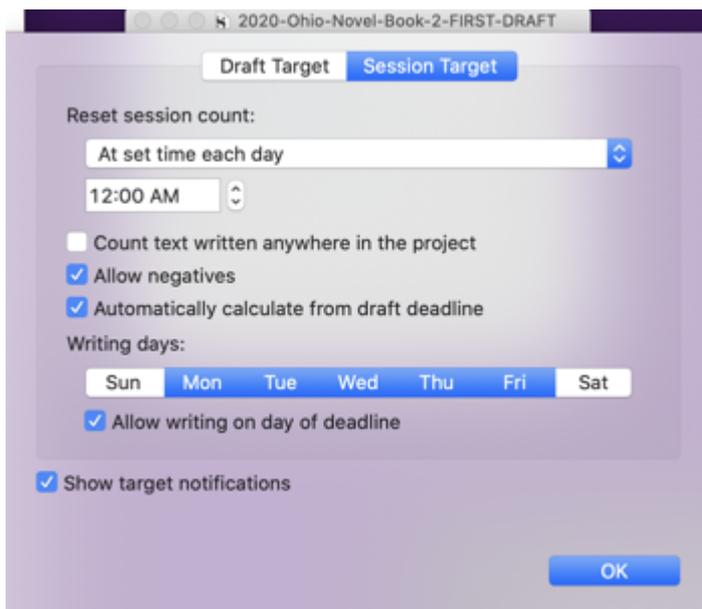


And again, that didn't figure in taking weekends off, so that I would be working toward an ever-increasing daily wordcount to hit the existing deadline.

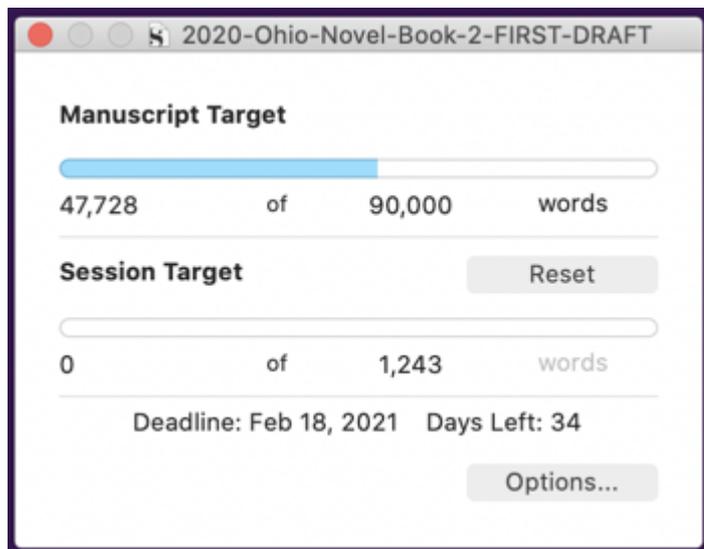
So first I looked at the deadline. It was too soon.



I went into Scrivener and changed the software so it no longer figured weekends as writing days. They're not – they're regeneration, relaxation, re-filling-the-well days.



Then I set the software to give me as close to 1250 words per day, and discovered that it would require me to reset my deadline to Feb. 18, 2021.



So I did that.

And then I got 1260 words today, in spite of the fact that I'd had a bunch of days off and a hard time getting started.

I've discovered that if I can hit my wordcount even when things aren't going well, the wordcount is pretty close to right.

And I like what I got today. Which also helps.

Words

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The Ghost Who'll Be Coming to Ohio

By Holly Lisle

The text message at the top of this post (which I sent to Matt at 3:34 AM on 12/6/20) includes the date and time because my half-sister, Julie, died in 2016, before her birthday, which was December 3rd.

I got the news of her death from my older son, Mark, who called Matt while we were sitting in a Pancake House in South Florida.

Mark had received the news from his grandmother, my first ex-mother-in-law, who'd been told by my mother, who was the bitch who didn't even let me know my sister was sick. "Mom" (said with the sort of sneer that inserts your favorite epithet in its place) just waited for Julie to die before passing on the news, and in her spectacularly cowardly fashion, sending it by third-hand sources.

That's "Mom's" style – waiting for folks to die, so that she can gloat over the knowledge, punishing me because after my son came to me to tell me about being molested by his father, Mom called him a liar – and me too. And I told her I that she and I were done.

My ex was found guilty, and convicted, and sentenced, by the way.

So both my sister's and my father's deaths have been third-hand news and both discovered way after the fact...

But you're never as done with the trash in your life as you might hope.

The funny thing is, when the Bitch Queen croaks, I'll never know. I'm remarkably okay with that.

But in any case, my sister's birthday was December 3rd. She would have been fifty-six this year, and I'd celebrated her birthday privately. And I'd been thinking about her.

And in one of those weird, disorienting dreams, on December 6th, I dreamed that I was fifteen again, that she and I were in the horrible torture-device fold-out couch in the sunroom of our single-wide trailer, which, in the manner of most sunrooms, didn't have any walls between it and the room next to it. In that trailer, the kitchen/dining room was there.

In my dream, Julie was on the right side of the fold-out bed (her spot) and sound asleep, while I was awake on the left. I'd dreamed that she stole the covers and kicked me – she was a magnificent blanket-stealer and kicked like a mule, and it was her kick that woke me up.

And I reached over to grab the covers, and she wasn't there.

So I grabbed my phone and texted Matt (who was awake and downstairs): "What happened to Julie? She was here..."

And he didn't text me back. He just came upstairs, looked in at me, and said, "Are you okay?"

And first I remembered that I wasn't fifteen. Not asleep in a single-wide trailer in the trailer park above Beaver Creek State Park. Married, with kids. With a husband who at that moment was looking in on me with slightly unsettled bemusement.

I said, "Oh."

But following right on that first realization, I remembered that Julie was dead. It came as a hard, mean shock, because just a second before, I'd been fifteen and she'd been right there with me and had kicked me awake while stealing the covers yet again.

And I said, "OH!" And my throat tightened up and for a couple minutes it got hard to breathe.

And that would have been it – weird dream, disturbing and disorienting but totally explicable – except for this morning.

When I woke up realizing that my main character in the Ohio Novels also has a half-sister. It was just a line in passing in the revision of Book 1, and I'd never planned to use the sister character.

This morning however, I realized that while my bitch of a mother made sure I never got to say goodbye to Julie, I don't have to. Not entirely. A part of my memory of her can live on in fiction.

My main character's sister is going to become part of the Ohio series. I probably won't name her Julie. But she'll be dark-haired, blue-eyed, and not look even remotely like her half-sister. Or her mother.

Just like Julie and me. Unlike Julie, the fictional sister won't have been born with cerebral palsy or mental retardation, so she'll get to do all the cool shit Julie never got to do in real life.

And in my own way, I'll get to say goodbye.

Related links:

1. <https://hollylisle.com/into-the-new-year-words-for-2017/>
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