

When a house is not a home (and a READERS-ONLY request)... 1266 words, and 9439 total

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

I thought I knew what was going to happen today... and what happened did fit exactly inside my objectives for the scene, while at the same time turning everything I'd planned inside out and upside down on me and surprising me completely.

And the cool twist of the day operated on the following writing principle:

Always assume your characters are smarter than you, that they're not telling you the truth about the situations that they're in, and that when you think you have a thing figured out and are getting ready to reveal it, the character who was supposed to be shocked is the one who is going to say, "You thought THAT was the surprise? Oh, please... This is what's really going on."

I love that moment – it's pure Muse, it shows me how parts of my mind have been working outside of my assumption of what I think I'm doing, so that when it all comes together, I'm shocked. And delighted. And the pieces all still fit – just not the way I expected them to.

It happens to me a lot – and today, it was especially fun.

A NOTE FOR URBAN FANTASY READERS ONLY

If you're interested in the way these stories are coming

together, and you want to be in on the five-book/five-month launch when I finish them and take them live, you can sign up for my launch list here.

Holly's "Not-Yet-Revealing-the-Pseudonym" Pre-Launch List

Once I have all five books done in first draft, I'll do the revision.

Of all five books.

At once.

This is what's technically known in fiction writing circles as a "a big pain in the ass" (seriously... that is a bona fide technical term) – but it's also the best way to make sure all five books connect deeply to each other, and the best way to get rid of weird "I changed my mind halfway through the series" continuity errors.

While I'm doing that, readers will start getting "urban fantasy girl" emails, where I'll be asking you some questions, and we'll be talking about urban fantasy in general, and mine in particular.

Once I have the revision done and have the books in Matt's hands (he's been my content editor for twenty-six years, and he's a great one), the folks on the pre-launch list will start being invited to discussions about cover art, series titles, characters you love and why... fun stuff that will at the same time help me figure out where in the Urban Fantasy landscape these books will fit (and that will let you figure out whether they're the kind of urban fantasy you like).

I'll be asking some questions, answering some questions, maybe giving a few teasers, DEFINITELY giving away two free short stories for all launch participants... and once you're comfortable that these either are or aren't your kind of urban fantasy, I'll invite the folks who are pretty sure this is

your kind of thing to pick up the actual novel. Five books. Five months. Absolute best prices on all of them during the launch.

Once again, **for urban fantasy fans only**, here's the sign-up form.

Holly's "Not-Yet-Revealing-the-Pseudonym" Pre-Launch List

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Special houses (may I never visit one on a bad day)... 1321 words of 1250 needed, 5573 total.

written by Holly
July 23, 2021
By Holly Lisle

Sometimes I scare myself.

I write words every day in a process where I give over a lot of control to my Right Brain Muse.

Small but important note: *Right-brain muses – parts of the brain that don't do much with words and spelling, but that do hold images and ideas and imagination – are theoretical, with the theory coming from studies done of people who had medically severed corpus callosa to stop intransigent seizures. It might very well be that with an unsevered corpus callosum, the brain is much more equitable in distributing its*

workload to both parts. I, however, like thinking of my left brain as the one that has the logic and reliably shows up for work every day whether we feel like it or not, while I like thinking that the right brain as the one infested with the nightmares and ghosts and really gruesome ideas for things to do to my poor characters that it finds disturbingly funny.

Either way, there is a part of my brain that comes up with wicked plot twists, that scares me, that makes me laugh, and that makes me cry, even though all the stuff it's pitching at me is stuff it made up – stuff that never really happened – and I try to put that part in charge of the writing as much as possible.

This morning, this part stepped into the scene I'd planned, muttered "Oh, honey, that's not even close to the worst thing that could happen in this situation" – and went to town.

Today I was almost a spectator to the words that rolled onto the page at ridiculous speed.

Today I scared myself.

No idea how much of this scene will survive in revision, but when my mind decided the bad guys were not going to win this round, it gave me something that I can see visiting me in nightmares for some years to come.

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Good wordcount, a good

concept... but, jury duty willing, tomorrow I'll be doing a fair amount of fixing

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

Yesterday's jury duty message was, boiled down, "Call again today." So at 5:30 tonight, I'll find out whether I'll be working tomorrow or not.

Meanwhile, instead of my daily short fast (from the night before until around 4 or 5 PM, when I eat my daily meal) – I'm doing a long fast.

For folks familiar with intermittent fasting, my daily eating-to-fasting ratio is anything from 1:23 to 3:21. And some weekends are "any hours if it's keto".

But this week, my last food was Sunday evening. And I will have my next food on Wednesday at around five or six PM (or whatever time I leave the courthouse, if there is a session and if the day's work runs longer than that).

Meanwhile, I'm a bit – skittery. A bit predatory.

I've learned that when you fast, after a couple days your body starts ramping up energy, pushing you to get up and move, to go out and hunt things, to find something tasty and kill it because you need to feed the fat stores – because those stores are the stuff you're suddenly running on exclusively.

Fasting is very, very good for those of us who at one time had cancers fed by blood glucose – and being down about two thirds of the right side of my tongue to remove a lot of dysplasia and a tiny bit of cancer, and thinking I might prefer to hang

on to the rest of my tongue, I eat very few carbs.

Carbs raise your blood sugar, blood sugar feeds susceptible cancers – and tongue surgery after the anesthesia wears off hurts about a hundred times worse than wide-awake no-medications-not-even-Tylenol childbirth. I've done both.

Anyway.

I got 1446 words, and met the character I needed to meet today, and she's talking to me from her point of origin – but the voice I originally had for her is wrong. I'll be able to keep a lot of today's words, but my start tomorrow – if I'm here writing – will be to read through from the point where she starts speaking and bring the first bits of voice up to the stuff I got toward the end that is better.

If I don't... well, she'll wait.

I've met her now. I like her. And introducing her to my MC before the event that happens on (book time, not real time) Friday before the concert is going to be interesting.

The words weren't perfect. But they were good enough to take me where I need to go.



If you want to be invited to my Readers' List for the Ohio Series, sign up below. This is the weekly blog digest, but only folks on this list will be invited to the Ohio Series launch list.



Today's words funded by my Ko-Fi supporters.

All supporters are thanked by name (withheld by request) in each book's acknowledgements.



Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



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1281 words, the start of chapter three, and we're deep in the muck now!

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

Today the words just flew. I was late getting started, and I'm still done with the fiction before 11 AM!

Which is fortunate, because I have a lot of NOT fiction I have to deal with today. But I got my words first, and I love what I got.

My MC got the proof that the corpse was murdered – this is not a spoiler, so I can happily state that. The spoiler would be why... which she doesn't know yet, but I mostly do.

And the town's ambient magic, and the folks who know how to use it for evil, are involved. Again – not a spoiler.

But to be able to live in the mundane version of the place I'm writing, to be able to use my existing house as one of the

settings, to be able to get all the plants and animals and folks right because I'm actually living here and writing here (or at least a version of "here" that never was, and never could be) is a daily joy.

Off now to deal with the much less delightful "other stuff."



Get Holly's Free Fiction Sampler, plus Weekly Fiction Updates



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**Mystery character D- became
S- today as I got to know her
better: 1330 words, and a**

good, solid scene

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

Folks show up when you're writing, and audition for parts, and as you start writing them, you don't know whether you're wasting every word that includes them, or whether they're going to make your story better.

You haven't planned them. You have no idea who they really are, or how they fit into your story – but in the immediate moment, you give them names and let them run with the solution to the problem you're having at right then... and you hope for the best.

Sometimes they turn out to be disasters, and sometimes you only realize deep in the middle of the book – when they've broken everything you've planned and have not replaced it with anything better. (As with my novel originally titled *Closer to Chaos*, which was published as *The Wreck of Heaven* after it nearly wrecked ME.)

Sometimes, however, you realize these volunteers are people you loved who are long dead – memories summoned from your childhood to carry a little bit of the book for you, and maybe do something meaningful in your world.

The character who showed up yesterday as D- turned out to be an avatar of a beloved aunt of mine, changed in almost every way except for the quality of her character as a human being. And S- was the name the character, once I got to know her better today, picked for herself.

My aunt was wonderful, and I miss her terribly. And now she, as someone almost entirely new, has at least a small part in this story.



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Today I figured out three of the four primary problems to solve in Book 5

written by Holly
July 23, 2021
By Holly Lisle

I had a lot of "Monday stuff" to deal with that could not be put off, so I got started late on the Ohio Book 5 outline.

Today was figuring out secondary story arcs for my primary characters who are NOT my MC.

Tomorrow, I'll work on my main character's primary story arc

for the final book in the series.

And then get as many line-for-scene Sentences as I can.



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Finished Book 3 Outline, Three Scenes into Book 4 – and the mysterious origins of the funny bits.

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

As I've mentioned before, I outline. One 30-word sentence per

chapter (knowing even as I do it that I will write extra, unexpected scenes; will write AGAINST some planned, outlined scenes; and will come up with some shit out of nowhere that suddenly has to be in the book, and that changes everything).

Mine is a messy, gory, grubby process that leaves a lot of bent and broken stuff in its wake – which is why I am the Small God of ferocious One Pass Revision.

But first, I outline.

And today I finished the Book 3 outline, and got three GOOD scenes into book 4.

Things are twisting, shifty, getting messy and scary and grim in the main storyline – and the funny stuff never appears in the outline. The funny stuff only happens when I'm actually writing, when my Node Of Perversity observes that one character has a bad addiction... and then follows another character unknowingly feeding that character's addiction to its logical conclusion.

Which made me laugh my ass off, and made Matt, my editor (and husband), laugh so hard he snorted. That almost never happens, so it was a huge win.

But that's all shit I can't plan.

The PLAN is dark, and twisty, and dangerous, and filled with people I love getting deeper into muck they're going to have a helluva time surviving.

I just have faith that Smartass Holly will show up while I'm writing that stuff, and make all the rest of us laugh.

No word count. It's pointless in outlining. But finishing Outline 3 and getting partway into Outline 3 is GOOD progress.



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Sign up for Holly's Thursday Writing Tips



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The Ohio Novel #1 Is Done! (Or what it's like to disappear into a black box)

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

I wrapped up my final draft yesterday.

In spite of best efforts, I came in over my 90,000K wordcount by about 12,000 words.

I don't have a title for the novel yet (Matt comes up with my best titles, and I'm really hoping he can pull out something amazing, both for the first book and for the entire series).

I do have my pseudonym. I can't give either until – BARE MINIMUM – the first five books are out and starting to find

their audience.

And then I'll only be giving it to the folks on my mailing list who are genuinely interested in the genre.

Since I'm publishing the Ohio series independently, since I'm bringing the series and world (with possible subsequent series) out under a pseudonym, and since I have to plot the next four novels, then have to complete the entire 5-book series – have all five written, revised, edited, bug-hunted, formatted, covered with pro-quality covers, and get them all up into Amazon-exclusive KDP and print formats, and then launch them at the speed of one book a month for five months, I have a long, long way to go.

But... THIS TIME, I'm trying to work with Amazon's algorithms, and see what I can learn from doing that.

It's an investment in manpower. A BIG one – primarily but not exclusively mine. We're talking the time, effort, focus, dedication, that goes into thinking and then writing 400,000+ MORE connected, related, compelling words of fiction that must be outlined, first-drafted, finished, revised, edited, bug-hunted, typeset, put into Kindle, print, and other formats (the Ohio novels will start Amazon-exclusive, but probably won't stay that way past the completion of the initial five-book launch) have cover copy written and tested and re-written, have title testing – so I'm talking about an all-in commitment of a big chunk of my life, with no feedback (except from Matt, Becky, and my bug hunters) until this whole thing goes live.

It's also an investment in money: All mine. Just the cash outlay for five great, professional covers, is significant. But much, much more expensive than that is opportunity cost – the things I don't get paid for because of the time and effort I'm putting into this project that I *hope* I might get paid for... that isn't a new writing class or a couple of classes I

KNOW I could get paid for.

If it goes big for me, THEN my writing students will get my numbers and how I did it, along with this really cool story development process I've come up with and am using for these. Maybe some workshops.

If it doesn't go big for me, they'll get the really cool story development process... but that's not a cool new workshop that might be able to give writers willing to do the work (as outlined above, so we're talking BRAVE writers) a path to building a live-on fiction income. The story development thing is just a few lessons. Probably added into an existing class or two.

And here's the thing that's making me a little nuts.

The entire process has to be done completely in the dark. I have to build EVERYTHING, pay for EVERYTHING, set up EVERYTHING, write EVERYTHING, and publish EVERYTHING... with nobody but Matt, Becky, and myself seeing what I'm doing. (Well, at the point where I'm ready for bug-hunters, I already have a couple lined up, and will bring in a few more, and this handful of readers will go through all five novels back to back to back. And sign an NDA beforehand that they can't tell anyone who I am, or what my pseudonym is, or where the website is, or anything. Not until the books are doing so well that I can bring in my other genre-related fiction to the new writer under a "written as Holly Lisle" label with the pseudonym as the author name.

I can't share snippets of any of the Ohio stuff – not snippets or scenes or teaser stuff or worldbuilding – on my blog, on the podcast, in the writing community forum. Nothing.

I can't put links to the books when they come out here or in the writing community or on the podcast page.

I can't link my old novels to this new set.

I have to become invisible.

Not my strong suit.

But for this test to mean anything, for this process to mean anything, this is where I am.

At some point in the future, I hope to be able to share some crazy great news. Or at least, “Hey, I’m making enough to pay off the house.” That would be really cool.

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The Ohio Series: Writing this one works differently

written by Holly
July 23, 2021
By Holly Lisle

I mentioned that I’m going to have a different pseudonym for the Ohio series books (and I have real titles and a real series title for this project) – but all of that is staying under wraps until after I start bringing out the books and letting them find their readers.

But this is an odd project for me in another way, too.

I’m also writing these differently. I’m sort of collaborating with Matt – I’m doing the writing, but...

I’m printing off each chapter as I finish it, and putting it

on Matt's desk. He's making notes in the margins, and I'm going back the next day and making changes the next day based on his comments, and then adding new stuff.

Well, we're only on day two, so that's how I think it'll end up working.

This is something new for both of us, and yesterday he read what I'd printed off for him, and then thought about it, and we ended up having a long talk about the intro, the world, the worldbuilding, the main character, the magic...

Fun, in places really moving... we're both pulling from deeply personal parts of our lives on this project. And what he brought to it yesterday gave me something so strong this morning that I ended up making myself cry as I was writing.

But I was pulling stuff out as quickly as I was putting stuff in. And at the end of two hours and change of writing, I was down a net 63 words. So this morning my little image shows a negative number.

Positive changes in the story, though. Something a lot better to build on in the weeks to come.

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Why I shut down my Patreon fundraiser

written by Holly

July 23, 2021

By Holly Lisle

I'd intended to send a **Questions & Answers** email to my **How to Write a Novel** launch list, but that's going to have to wait. Instead, I did THIS.

Closed my "Move out of Florida while writing fiction" fundraiser.

Here's why – it's this clause in the Patreon Legal Agreement

<https://www.patreon.com/legal>

By posting content to Patreon you grant us a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, sublicensable, worldwide license to use, reproduce, distribute, perform, publicly display or prepare derivative works of your content.

Understand that I read that clause and all the rest of them before signing up.

BUT... I'm not a lawyer, and I understood that clause to mean that Patreon was claiming the right to use my Patreon-created content (in other words, my POSTS) to promote the site.

I DID NOT think that they were claiming the right to use and abuse the content I was giving my patrons. In this case, three monthly chapters of the raw first draft of one of my current novels in progress, Dead Man's Party.

A friend emailed me with a link to this post, however:

<https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-beginning-of-the-end-for-patreon/>

Turns out, I was wrong. Patreon is claiming rights to my novel.

So I'm out. I sent the first copy of this email to my patrons using a private Patreon post, and then I shut down my Patreon fundraiser, and am now trying to figure out how to actually

close my account.

I'm not letting this kill my dream of moving us out of Florida...

...(hopefully before the next hurricane, if not the start of the hurricane season).

How you can help, if you want to –

IF YOU'RE HERE AS A WRITER:

I have created original classes ranging from under ten dollars to way over a hundred. If one of the classes I offer could help you, then you buying it would help me.

MY COMPREHENSIVE CAREER-LEVEL CLASSES (in recommended order)

***** How to Write a Novel *****

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/class/how-to-write-a-novel.html>

(IN LAUNCH: On sale ONLY through Tuesday APRIL 8 – Final Discount Launch)

How to Revise Your Novel:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-revise-your-novel.html>

How to Write a Series:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-a-series.html>

How to Think Sideways: Career Survival School for Writers:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-think-sideways.html>

WRITING CRAFT SERIES (Each class is under \$10)

Create a Character Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/characterclinic.html>

Create A Plot Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/plotclinic.html>

How to Write Page-Turning Scenes:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/pageturningscenes.html>

WORLDBUILDING SERIES (Each class is under \$10)

Create A Language Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/languageclinic.html>

Create a Culture Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/cultureclinic.html>

Create a World Clinic:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/worldclinic.html>

WORKSHOPS & MID-SIZED CLASSES (PRICES VARY)

How to Write Short Stories:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-short-stories-class.html>

How to Write Villains:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/how-to-write-villains.html>

How to Write Dialogue with Subtext:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/dialogue-subtext.html>

Title Cover Copy Marketing Basics:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/titlecovercopy.html>

How to Find Your Writing Discipline:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/writingdiscipline.html>

How to Find Your Writing Voice:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/writing-voice.html>

How to Motivate Yourself:

<http://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/motivate-yourself.html>

Beat Writer's Block:

<https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/beatwritersblock.html>

FREE, INCLUDED WITH (also Free) SITE MEMBERSHIP

How to Write Flash Fiction That Doesn't Suck

[https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/free-flash-fiction-class.h
tml](https://hollyswritingclasses.com/go/free-flash-fiction-class.html)

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IF YOU'RE HERE AS A READER:

You can help out by buying some of my indie-published fiction.

SHORT STUFF, CURRENTLY AMAZON ONLY:

Light Through Fog:

[https://www.amazon.com/Light-Through-Holly-Lisle-Singles-ebook
/dp/B0096F4HY0/](https://www.amazon.com/Light-Through-Holly-Lisle-Singles-ebook/dp/B0096F4HY0/)

Rewind:

<https://www.amazon.com/Rewind-Holly-Lisle-Singles-Book-ebook/dp/B00AY10HAE/>

Strange Arrivals:

<https://www.amazon.com/Strange-Arrivals-Twisty-Fantasy-Tales-ebook/dp/B00EOWMYRW/>

FANTASY — ARHEL TRILOGY

Fire in the Mist:

<https://books2read.com/FireInTheMist>

Bones of the Past:

<https://books2read.com/BonesOfThePast>

Mind of the Magic:

<https://books2read.com/MindOfTheMagic>

DARK SCIENCE FICTION-ISH

SETTLED SPACE

Both of the Cadence Drake novels – *Hunting the Corrigan's Blood* and *Warpaint*, are off sale while I come up with new titles and new cover art for them, and new key words, descriptions, and other marketing that allows me to correctly put them in front of the audience that likes a few vampires and a bit of horror with its spaceships.

The Longview Chronicles (complete Series) is in the same universe – still dark, but without the vampires:

<https://books2read.com/longview-chronicles>

Or you can get the individual stories:

Born from Fire:

<https://books2read.com/born-from-fire>

Suzee Delight:

<https://books2read.com/the-selling-of-suzee-delight>

Philosopher Gambit:

<https://books2read.com/the-philosopher-gambit>

Gunslinger Moon:

<https://books2read.com/gunslinger-moon>

Vipers' Nest:

<https://books2read.com/vipers-nest>

The Owner's Tale:

<https://books2read.com/the-owners-tale>

STANDALONE URBAN FANTASY**Minerva Wakes:**

<https://books2read.com/minerva-wakes>

PARANORMAL SUSPENSE**Author Page:**

<https://books2read.com/ap/xbzgyx/Kate-Aeon>

Midnight Rain:

<https://books2read.com/midnight-rain>

Last Girl Dancing:

<https://books2read.com/last-girl-dancing>

I See You:

<https://books2read.com/i-see-you>

I have much more fiction that's commercially published, or which is out of print and has reverted to me, but which I have not yet republished.

I'm not linking to ANY of that fiction, because your purchase of used books or books where publishers haven't paid royalties in years will not help me.

So there we are.

I want to thank all my patrons again, and I am so sorry that I had to do this, but there is no way I can permit this:

Excerpted from Patreon Legal Terms

You keep full ownership of all content that you post on Patreon, but to operate we need licenses from you.

By posting content to Patreon you grant us a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, sublicensable, worldwide license to use, reproduce, distribute, perform, publicly display or prepare derivative works of your content.

No. Just NO. Holly

P.S. I have had one of my Patreon patrons already ask me how she could continue to support me on a monthly basis.

Here's the answer I gave her:

"I'll look into what's available. Right now, I'm crushed to discover the rights Patreon actually claimed, and worried about getting involved with any other site. So I'm in limbo."

You'll find my blog at HollyLisle.com. I'll be keeping my folks there up to date on how I deal with this. It sucks.

Hugs, and thank you for asking."

Why is EVERYBODY on my blog, my mailing list, and in my forums getting this?

Because if you know me, you're probably either a reader or a writer. If you're a writer, you may be considering using Patreon, and you need to know. If you're a reader considering funding someone on Patreon, THEY need to know.

And this is the ugliest, broadest rights-grab I have personally ever seen. Or sadly, been caught up in.

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