

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

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."



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# **Mondays, Death, and Taxes: Life's Sure Things**

By Holly Lisle

I did not get everything done on taxes over the weekend – and being self-employed is not anything like working a 9-to-5 job where you get money back. When you're self-employed, you always owe. Making sure you find and identify the receipts for everything that was deductible, therefore, is a critical and damned stressful task.

It's probably going to take me the rest of today to mark up all the deductible stuff on the receipts, and get all the paperwork into some semblance of order, and kick the Annual Stress Inducer out the door.

NEXT week, I'll have jury duty (pending the county court having trials going to jury, but I won't know for sure until Sunday night).

Tomorrow through Friday of this week, then, I'll get to write

fiction.

But today is just going to be a continuation of YUCK.

Hope your Monday is better.

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# Today is brought to you by math...

By Holly Lisle

This isn't the way I want to spend a Friday, but I cannot ignore the fact that I have to sort all my receipts, mark every single item that is deductible, gather up all the papers, pack them up, and get the box to my accountant.

Even really shitty years produce a stack of paperwork, and no matter how much I want to do the next 1250 words on Ohio 3, I can no longer ignore my Tax Nest Monster, which is glaring at me from its box under the desk.

This project might, in fact, be my Friday, Saturday, and Sunday... but I'm going to be back to the Ohio Novels and book three on Monday.

I'd like to say that I'll be well-rested and raring to go.

But what are the odds?

Either way, even if I come into Monday tired and cranky, I can still get words, and it will be okay (for me, if not for my characters)... because once all five novels are written in first

draft, I'm going through a massive five-book One-Pass Revision, which is where the magic happens.

Magic Monday, or magic later... Same results either way.

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

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 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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# Ran past my word-count objective because ... you know ... corpse... 1417 words (of 1250 planned)

By Holly Lisle

In all fairness, I did know there was going to be a dead body today.

I knew, vaguely, whose it was going to be.

But that was it. As I started writing, people started showing up, and bits and pieces of action started unrolling before my eyes, and a new character who is going to be at least somewhat important in this book showed up, and keeps jamming her pointy elbow in my ribs saying, "I could be important for a long damn time..."

And she might be right. I like her. She's related to the corpse, and she reminds me of a long-dead family member of my own that I loved dearly, and there is a corpse-vacated spot in the book for her already sitting there, open and waiting to be filled by someone.

I have a firm rule, however – Never trust walk-ons to not screw up your story.

So D- will get this scene.

I'll let her float around in the back of my mind while I work through the planned outline, and see if she can step into the vacated spot and be useful without being destructive.

The story itself is coming along grandly.

Tomorrow will be me, the corpse... and some little hint of the *bad* that's running in the undercurrent.

I don't know what this *bad* is. That's not part of the outline.

I need it to be organic, I need it to fit the past two books, and I need to let it surprise me. If it doesn't surprise me, it won't surprise you.

So. Good writing day. Could potentially fuel a lot of fun writing for the rest of the week.

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## **Ohio #3 – 1585 words, and introducing the first problem**

By Holly Lisle

I got off to a rough start today – slept in, which I hate, and got distracted by email, which in general I don't even open until I get my words...

But. I got good words. I got my establishing scene, the 'new normal', then rolled right into the first problem, which doesn't look like much in the same way that the tip of an iceberg doesn't look like much.

I'm happy with my progress, and looking forward to doing this again tomorrow.

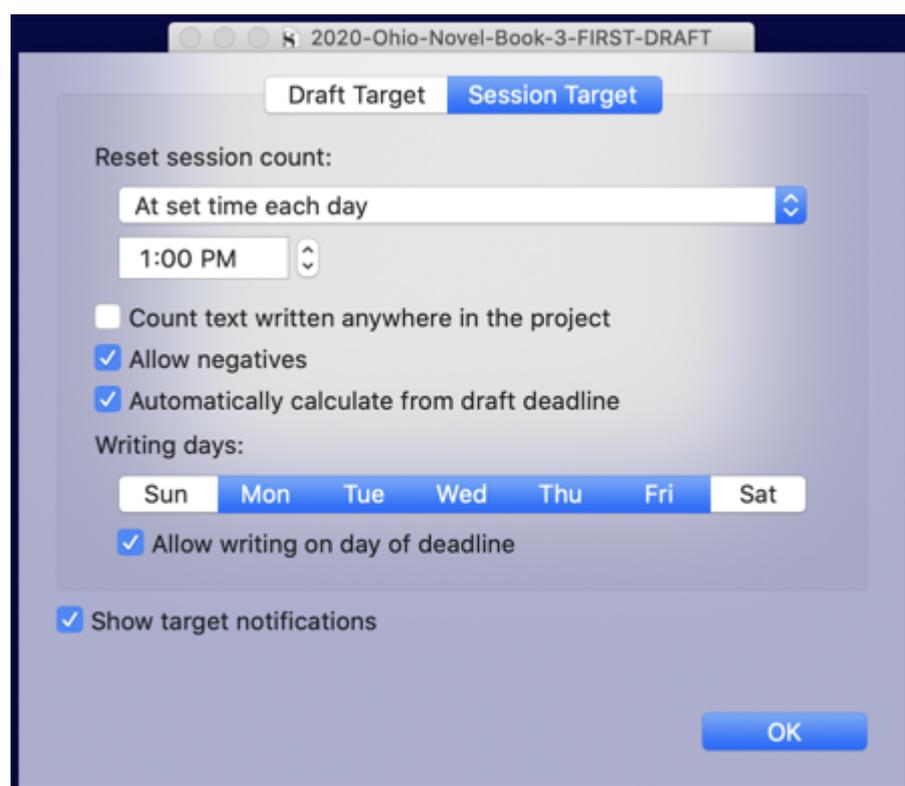
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# So... Monday. Document built, outline set up, and 522 words of fiction written on Ohio #3

By Holly Lisle

So. Built my Ohio Book 3 line-for-scene outline into Scrivener's nifty sidebar today (can't show – way too many spoilers). But I can show how I have the document set up to make sure (at least as sure as possible) that I'll stay on deadline, even though I came in under the count today.



I gave myself extra time (until 1PM every workday) though I try to be done with the writing at about 11 AM.

I slept in until eight this morning (two hours over my usual wake-up), so I got started late.

I slept really well last night, which is unusual for me. But I haven't adjusted to the time change, and as I do every year, I gave Benjamin Franklin a hearty round of cursing for his "Daylight Saving" time.

How 'bout we just let people who want to leap out of bed at six AM, my preferred time, do that?

And let the folks who want to sleep in until seven or eight or noon do THAT?

Anyway... back to the set-up. You can see that I'm allowing for the tracking of negative words, since sometimes I rip out a thousand or two at a time, and I need to know how that affects my progress. And need to be able to show that to the folks reading this.

I have Saturday and Sunday cleared because I need that two-day weekend to unwind, and if those days count on the deadline, I think I have more elbow room to hitting it than I actually do.

And I have the automatic calculation of the words I need to get each day set up instead of my preferred flat 1500, just because it's the only way to get the automatic calculation... which is a lot more handy coming down to the deadline wire than the reminder that I want to hit 1500 words a day. That I can remember.

And... I like the words I got today. IN REAL LIFE, I got more than this, but the first part of what I got was adding an extra scene in Book Two that gives it a nice rounded-out ending.

And then I started with today's beginning, which starts out nice. Tomorrow, it's going to end pointy, with teeth.

But boy, doesn't the progress part of that progress bar look pitiful right now?



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**Today was the second of two  
“writing cool-down” days.  
Monday... BOOK THREE.**

By Holly Lisle

Today I answered more emails, and tried to get some writer T-shirts and other things up on Teespring, which has just completely redone their software, causing me to lose all the work I'd put up there over the past couple of weeks.

The upcoming merchandise – T-shirts and bags and a few other things – is all for writers right now. On very good advice from both readers and writers, I won't be offering any Ohio novel stuff until the series has fans who want it.

So this post is just to let you know I'm around, but that I'm taking the necessary break from the project before I go back to that third outline and set up the document in Scrivener and start writing.

I need to read it cold while I'm entering the outline sentences into each chapter. I'll be able to spot obvious problems then.

The sly, subtle problems, of course, will hide out until revision to cause the absolute maximum head-beating and swearing.



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# Fifth Outline Finished! All 30 scenes, and a solid ending to the five-book series

By Holly Lisle

Done, DONE, **DONE!!!**

I didn't see the ending coming – had no clue how I was going to get there – and then, as it so often does, my muse gave a wicked little giggle and whispered the really terrible thing I could do to my Main Character...

And when I did that, everything else fell together beautifully.

I now have two novels written in first draft, three novels outlined in 30-scene line-for-scene outlines... and the ending that's worth fighting to beat.

**I'll say this. The ending is good enough that I might not be able to beat it.**

(See me saying that loudly? I'm saying that because every time I do, my Muse whispers "...wanna bet?..." And goes out of its way to prove me wrong. Every time it does, I win, because I get an even better ending.)

So... I'm going to take off the rest of the week from fiction to let everything from the outlining process cool.

Instead, I'll get caught up on several thousand emails (I wish I were exaggerating), and hang out a bit more in the forums, and make some Writer Merch for my [HollysWritingClasses.com](http://HollysWritingClasses.com) folks.

Monday, I'll show up for work and set up the document for Ohio

Book Three, and see if I can get the first scene or two written.

I love this world, I love these stories... and BOY, do I love what I'm heading towards in Book 5.



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# **A Tale of Ten Sentences – the first third of Book 5 starts coming together**

By Holly Lisle

So...

This morning I ended up deleting one of yesterday's primary story conflicts, replacing it with something bigger, deeper, and more meaningful, and coming up with the fourth and final story conflict – which had eluded me yesterday.

I then ALSO hammered out the first ten 30-word story sentences. (Raw concepts for the first ten chapters of book five.)

This took me the full three hours of my fiction time, required a lot of writing, tossing, reconsidering, talking to myself, and checking back on the previous four outlines to make sure I wasn't dropping essential threads, or forgetting what I want to accomplish in the last book of this first five-book series.

What do I want to accomplish?

Book Five of series one has to give the entire series a complete, conclusive ending. No cliffhangers, no primary stories dropped or forgotten, no cheating.

And what I did today was a solid start on that.

I'm happy with what I got – EVEN THOUGH I know damn well by the time I'm writing book five, I'll have something better.

**Here's the thing I've discovered for my own work: *To write something BETTER, first I have to write SOMETHING.***

And today was a pretty good day of "write something."



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