

Iambic Pentameter

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

“About the iambic pentameter – were you serious, or were you being funny?”

Both, actually.

You ever sit and think about how you think? I visualize my thoughts as a twenty-four hour news program (though when I’m asleep, some ass changes the channel to horror).

Big picture on the screen is what I’m doing at the time – either I’m in a book I’m writing, seeing and hearing what’s going on there, or I’m with my guys, or I’m mowing the lawn and we’re getting the “Grass, Weeds and Solar Activity Report.”

Break-in news interrupts regular programming with bulletins like, “Cat Boxes That Kill – Have You Cleaned Yours Today?” and “Tragedy In the Bill Box: Time Is Running Out!” (These bulletins occasionally interrupt nighttime programming, too. Sometimes, frankly, I don’t mind.)

Picture-in-picture up in the corner is the “Cats and Crashes?” radar report. It’s on and tracking all suspicious noises.

And down on the bottom, the crawl. “... with rump-fed runions battered, pale, and ... | ... tween dawn and true day riven, thunder-ripped and lightning-rent, the ground and sky like warriors scarred ... | ... about the past the present dares to mutter, knowing not that it one day will fall behind and in its turn will be maligned ... | ... dinner’s late, the dishes need to be retired from the counter, put away that there will be clean spaces for the cooking and ... | ... the toilet overflowing is; what horrors did the child commit with too much paper? Why

will he not once recall the flushing rules? ...

The crawl is always there. Mostly I can ignore it. Sometimes it leaps into the main screen. **SOME**times it tosses itself into dialogue I'm writing, so that, if I'm unwary, my modern-day heroine will blurt, "I would not wander down that path. It looms; it leaves me shivering." To which the hero replies, "Don't worry, I'll be right beside you; nothing will attack you here."

To which I can only say, "Arrrgh," and go back and rewrite the damned dialogue.

Incidentally, in response to the suggestion that I give in to the impulse and use this stuff from time to time – well, in my fantasy novels, I do. The **SECRETS TEXTS** and **VINCALIS THE AGITATOR** have some – that's the stuff that hit the page in first draft and didn't need to be reworked. If I didn't write fantasy, though, what the hell would I do with that never-ending stream of jumbled, two-beat words and phrases?

Comments enabled by intent. Does **anybody** else have this sort of background streaming weirdness going on?

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