

Friday... got the words but no more time.

By Holly Lisle

So I started with 1128, finished with 61,864 words, and got my minimum word count to stay on deadline – 62,992.

It's Friday, and I still have a list of stuff to finish, so I'll just say, I LOVE where yesterday's scene ended up.

Awesome stuff to come back to next Monday.

Hope you have a great weekend.

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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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Trusting your characters to surprise you: 1400 words from Friday, reported a day late

By Holly Lisle

Writing yesterday went really well. I hit this awesome surprise, where one of my characters suddenly did something perfectly unexpected, showing up at my main character's house with a cell phone video showing the impossible in action.

It was exactly the weird and twisty wonderfulness that thrilled me, and made me laugh, and at the same time made chills run down my spine, because it makes the situation my main character is in so much worse.

After the writing, however, my day took a sideways turn, and I didn't have the chance to blog.

So I don't have a spiffy picture of yesterday's daily progress.

But I did get the words, and I cannot wait until Monday to get back to them. I will wait, because part of the process is religiously observing the two days off that let my subconscious mind refill.

I'm refilling.

So enjoy your weekend. I intend to. ☐

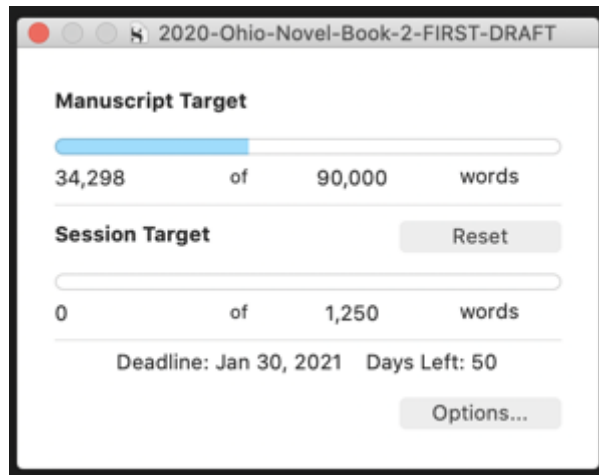
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Seven. But close to done.

By Holly Lisle

At the moment, I don't have much more to say than that. If I can get this last hill of shit shoveled, I will then be able to get some actual words today.

If I get to my fiction before I run out of working hours, I'll be starting at 34,298 words, with a writing goal of 1250 or better – but if I get to work on the book at all today, and don't hit my wordcount, just getting to write some fiction



will be a win.

Here's hoping. AND working.

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Help I didn't ask for... a long slog ahead to fix what a "helpful" company irreversibly broke

By Holly Lisle

Oh, irony.

Two days ago, I think, "Gee... the writing is going really well, I miss blogging, and I would love to blog about writing fiction again."

Two days ago, after a middle-of-the-road-but-not-bad day of getting my words – I have fun, I like the words I get, and I get enough of them to move the story forward and to add some pretty spiffy complications – some nameless jackass at some

nameless company decides that said jackass can make some changes to my basic NONWRITING work process that will make my life better by breaking the way I do damn near everything I do.

I can either put my faith in this awesome company [THAT'S IRONY] which – having once completely broken my still-unfixed daily work – has proven that although it might NOT break my process again, it could. At any time.

I can say, “Yeah, sure. I’ll take that chance.”

Or I can change my process, not depend on the help of that company or any other company like it, and make sure I control this particular mission-critical task from end to end.

EASY DECISION: Wherever it’s possible, you don’t give other folks the power to wreck your work.

OUTCOME: I have to figure out how to control the process from end to end.

So yesterday I worked from 6 a.m., when I started work and discovered I couldn’t work on anything else until I fixed this, to not long after 6 p.m., when my eyes were crossed and I didn’t dare keep going.

And my accomplishment can be summed up in a single number.

3

This is an objective number that defines what I accomplished yesterday, encompassing 12 hours of straight work, one cup of coffee, and one bathroom break. This is not 3 out of some knowable bigger number, because I have no way of telling what the end number could be. I could be 6. It could be 60. It could be worse than that.

It is, however, an objective number of what I’ve completed in a finite but very large task.

BECAUSE... if I can't get words, I can damnwell stick with my decision to get back to blogging, so that when I can get back to fiction, the blog will attest that I did not just forget. I did not lie down. I did not make excuses.

So that, when I can get back to the words, I will have the reminder of what broke them for however long this takes, and the reminder of how important it is to keep your mission-critical processes in your own hands.

Three. At the end of today there will be another number. At the end of tomorrow, there will be one after that. And so on, until this is fixed.

'Nuff said. Onward.

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