

Becoming Piers Anthony: The Not-Impossible Dream of 3 Books A Year

By Holly Lisle

A couple of things have changed in my life recently, one of which has been the writing of *Dead Man's Party*, my demo novel for the writing class I'm currently building, **How to Write a Novel**.

I've been dedicating one concentrated hour or so a week to the writing of the first draft (and a bloody awful first draft it is, too), but the bones of the story are solid, and it's going in a great direction, and it's turning funny on me all of a sudden.

And I've been reading through *Moon & Sun*, and taking notes, but they were not being very helpful notes.

Then, while Becky and I were talking about going back through the first two novels of my *Moon & Sun* series in order to pick up toys I'd left on the floor for the third book, I realized that I had not done an Octopus Map for the series.

So I built the Octopus Map (a core technique in my *How to Write a Series* class), and something that I mention in the upcoming **Episode 29** of *Alone in a Room with Invisible People*.

Once I remembered to do it, it took me about half an hour to get the overall bones of the final story figured out. I still have to do all the reading and the finding and identifying of essential toys, and some scene-by-scene plotting, but I know what the story is now. That's big.

So...

At the moment Patreon is covering me for one hour of fiction writing a day, and the income from my fiction isn't currently enough to run beyond that.

And I'm writing the How to Write a Novel class, and the demo novel, and doing the podcast, and reissuing some of my novels, and getting others ready to go live...

But I've discovered from my writing of *Dead Man's Party* that I can get a lot of actual written fiction done in an hour, and I want to be seeing more progress than I'm seeing.

Because almost all of my hours have been eaten up by research for *Moon & Sun*, I haven't been seeing a lot of progress.

But this morning I was standing in the shower and my Muse said, "Piers Anthony said he worked on THREE books at a time."

And then I thought, "I have five hours a week, and *Dead Man's Party* is only taking one hour, and I could limit my current reading and noting in the *Moon & Sun* series to two hours, which would let me do... What?"

"What third project?"

At which point, my Muse practically screamed in my ear, "The *Wishbone Conspiracy!!!*" With a muttered undertone of *you idiot*.

As I've noted elsewhere, my Muse and I have an interesting relationship.

With *Wishbone*, I already have the world, the characters, the opening chapter, and even a bit of the plot worked out.

So I'm going to do this:

- Two days a week I'll be working on *Moon & Sun 3: The Emerald Sun*

- One day a week I'll be writing *Dead Man's Party*
- And two days a week I'll be working on Cadence Drake in *The Wishbone Conspiracy*

If my Patreon funding can go up to two hours a day, or if I can get my fiction income up by other means (which I'm also working on), I'll be able to increase that. Top level would be three hours a day, which would still leave five (plus the occasional evening) for creating **How To Write A Novel** plus emails plus forums...

I think even at top funding, or with a much-increased readership of my fiction, this will still work.

Monday I start finding out.

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