

# The “five-year-old-at-Christmas” phenomenon

By Holly Lisle

I stayed up until about midnight last night, just so I would be able to sleep in until 6 AM. But it didn't work. This morning I woke up at 3 AM – that sort of hard wake-up where you know you're really awake and it's going to stick. I lay in bed as long as I could stand it, but finally gave up, got up and was at the desk and writing by 3:54 AM.

I know what this is – it's that early phase of a project excitement, which, like end-of-book excitement, sometimes hits me and won't let me sleep. I have all these words and images and cool twists and surprises, and just can't wait to get them on the page. I'm like a little kid at Christmas, knowing the good stuff is out there under the tree, and lying in bed in the wee hours of the morning with my eyes squinched shut, body rigid, fists clenched, waiting as long as I can stand without waking up Mom and Dad, and finally just not being able to stand it anymore, and tear-assing through the house to pound on the door and yell, “It's Christmas – Santa came and there are PRESENTS!”

Which, when you think about it, is a pretty cool way to feel about your job – and more than one day a year, too.

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