

Wandering Ways

By Holly Lisle

I'm almost done with the first draft of **The Ruby Key**. Due to the fact that I left out a lot of important and exciting things in the middle portion of the story (because I write very, very tight in first draft and almost always have to expand in revision) I'm going to end up wrapping the first draft at around 55K, and then going back and adding in. The story might go a bit longer than that, but my editor, Lisa, assured me that organic writing and running long was okay with her, so long as I didn't go over 100K. Since I'm pretty sure I can do what I need in 65K, I think I'm good to go on this one.

But that's not all I've been doing. **C–The Secret Project** is back in my life. I cannot leave it alone, which tells me that I shouldn't try. I'll give you the first two paragraphs; maybe those will tell you why this story is still eating at me after years of playing with it. (Maybe not. If not, then I concede the possibility of insane obsession. Otherwise, I'm holding out for *sane* obsession.)

Down the red clay road, dirt bone-dry and hard beneath her feet, with dust kicking up behind the heels of her cowboy boots, Kay strode with purpose. Blood on her palms, tears on her face. In her pocket, two wedding rings, a silver pin, an old harmonica. In her right hand, a shovel.

She'd left her purse in the car she'd abandoned a mile back. All her ID was in it: credit cards, driver's license, birth certificate, a load of things she was leaving behind. This was the last shot, last time, last gasp, last hope. And how much hope was it really, hoping to be reborn but being ready to die, too, if that was the way things went?

I'm slowly putting together the paperback workbook version of

Worldbuilding 2: Culture Clinic.

And I'm outlining **WB3: Build-A-World Clinic.**

Add in homeschooling the kidlet, and I've been a shadow of my former self online. But beneath the silence, a lot is going on.

Oh. And the business-related stress that had be tied up in knots for a couple of weeks? Resolved, all good, and there is a reason you want the very best agent you can get—and a reason I am grateful every day to have the best agent there is: You the writer are one lone, insignificant flyspeck in the universe of megacorp publishing—the industry that eats its young—and when you're making deals with the giants, you want a master duellist negotiating for you.

ADDED LATER: Forgot the **Sympathy for the Devil** screenplay. Doing that for the film school kid, who's finished film school, is casting for her second short, and to whom I promised a screenplay. I figure one from one of her favorites of my books would be good. At the moment, I'm notecarding that, which means lots of words but no visible progress.

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